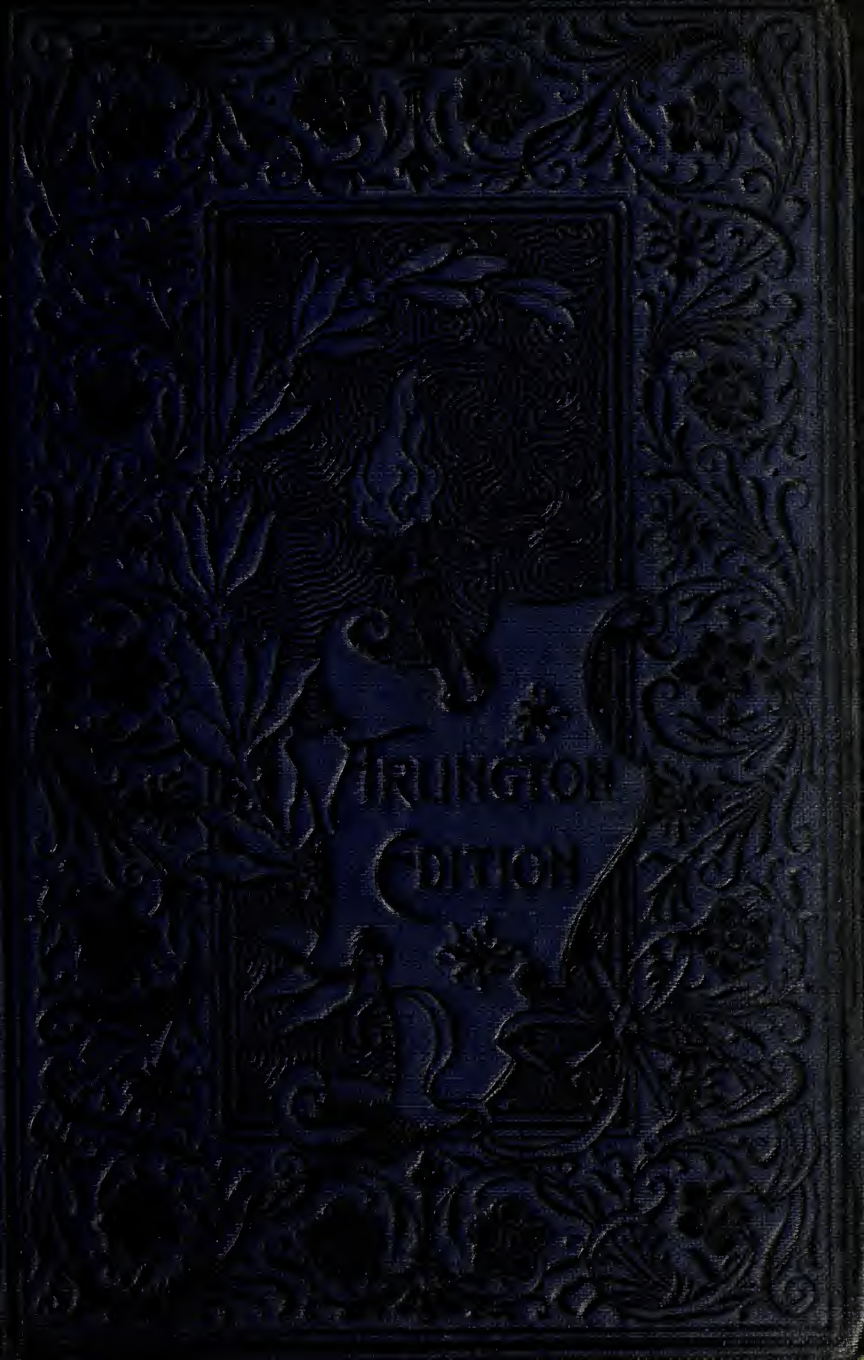

IRLINGTON
EDITION

PLANTATION JIM,

AND THE

FREEDOM WHICH HE OBTAINED.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"ENGLISH HARRY," "GEORGE PERLEY'S LESSON,"
"JAMIE NOBLE," ETC.

NEW YORK
HURST AND COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	PLANTATION TALK.	5
II.	THE ALARM.	15
III.	THE FLIGHT.	25
IV.	JIM CONFISCATED.	35
V.	JIM'S ANGEL.	45
VI.	A NEW FREEDOM. . . .	57
VII.	THE HARVEST.	64
VIII.	JIM AT SCHOOL. . . .	71
IX.	JIM'S LIBERTY COMPLETE. .	79
X.	WORKING FOR AN OBJECT. .	89

PLANTATION JIM.

CHAPTER I.

PLANTATION TALK.

HOSE who have read the story of "Gracie Goodwin" in "The Rustic Library," will want to know more of Jim, the negro boy, whom Gracie's brother, Captain Austin Goodwin, confiscated in South Carolina.

Jim belonged to Colonel Lawrence Porter, an extensive cotton planter, not far from Port Royal. His master was not a hard man, according to the slaveholder's way of judging. He aimed at

giving all his hands enough to eat, clothing enough to cover their nakedness, which was all they wanted, he thought, as it was seldom cold enough to need clothes as a matter of comfort. He did not whip the working hands if they worked from twelve to fourteen hours a day without much regard to weather or weariness; if they were quiet and obedient to all their master, or those whom he set over them, required, and especially if they never expressed by actions, nor even words or looks, a wish to be free. But as the slaves of Colonel Porter did not always meet these conditions fully, there was whipping on his plantation, and the consequences of these whippings were sometimes very serious to those who received them. The blame for such serious results, seen in scars, in maimed limbs, and in long-continued suffering, was al-

ways owing to the faults of the slaves, at least in the colonel's judgment, and in the opinion of his white neighbors; so there was never any loss of reputation on his part as a good master.

Jim was "a plantation boy;" that is, he did not live in the town, where his master lived most of the time, and serve as a house servant. He was a field hand, living under the eye of his master's slave-driver, Stephen Smith, a Northern man, with little kindness of heart, and very little principle. Smith could work, and he knew how to make others work when the power was put into his hands, and this was why he was employed and paid high wages by Colonel Porter. The negroes called him "an awful mean man," "poor white trash," and hated him and feared him in about an equal degree.

Jim's mother was one of the very black-

est slaves on the plantation. This fact was more noticed because but few of them were of a pure African blood, and the greater number were yellow, or nearly white. Her name was Susan; but she was generally known as Black Sue. Black Sue was proud of her color, and sneered at the "yaller folks." She, too, was a field hand, having spent her life mostly in either her little low cabin or in the cotton field. She was strong in body and very gentle in temper, so that even the hard-hearted driver, Yankee Smith, could seldom find occasion to whip her. Her son Jim had her blackness of skin and strength of body, but not all of her gentleness. Jim was not so much of a talker as the yellow folks; but he was a good listener. After the work of the field was done, he would lie on his back on the ground, with his hands clasped over

his forehead, seeming to be asleep, and listen to the talk of his more intelligent, scheming white associates in slavery. This talk often, in a warm summer night, continued in low whispers far into the hours of rest. When Jim was deeply interested, and the talkers were too absorbed to notice him, he would roll over upon his belly, and lift up his head, like a turtle sunning itself upon a log, and catch every word. Fortunately Jim was lightly esteemed by the yellow boys, and thought to be so indifferent to their conversation and plans, that they scarcely noticed his presence. But Jim had a wonderful memory, and no stupid understanding. His mother, and older sister, Nancy, were the only occupants with him of the cabin. His father had been sold years before, and removed, they knew not whither. Jim often astonished his mother

and "Nance," as his sister was called, by repeating, with a knowing air, what he had heard. At first his mother gave little heed to his talk, except to chide him, by saying, "Dar, Jim, be dun wid dem silly stories!"

Nancy was a more interested listener. But soon, much which Jim related reached Black Sue's ears from other sources, and she began to listen with deep attention.

"De yaller boys say Massa Porter awful consarned about dem Yankees dat Massa Jeff whipped so awful in Charleston," said Jim, in a low tone.

"De Yankees hates us poor niggers!" said Nancy, timidly. Jim shrugged his shoulders at this remark, and leaned close to his sister, and whispered, —

"Dat's what Massa Porter say. Dey ain't all like Massa Smith."

Nancy looked relieved, but thought she

should not like to see any more Yankees. She had trembled for two weary years at the sight of her master's Yankee overseer.

But the rumors became more exciting, and the whispering, to which Jim continued to listen, extended, at times, until the near approach of the morning hours. Colonel Porter visited the plantation every day, and was engaged in long and earnest conversations with his overseer. Some of the yellow boys, who were always regarded as the most dangerous of the slaves, were sent away, their friends knew not where. The Sabbath came, and the much loved visit of "the Elder," who occasionally came to speak to them about heavenly things, was anticipated by the slaves with even more than usual interest. But he did not come; and, instead, was the hated presence of the overseer, in

every part of the little village of cabins, at unexpected hours, during the whole of their day of rest. The slaves trembled at his coming more than ever; for his countenance was that of a wild beast about to spring upon his prey.

"Dar is some awful ting goin' to hap'n now, sartin!" whispered Black Sue to her children on that Sabbath evening. "I feels dreffful!"

"And I feels fust rate," said Jim, in an excited tone. "Dey says dat all de white folks is awful scar'd. De yaller boys says dem Yankees dat's comin' will 'fiscate all de niggers for freedom. Hi! den dis child will be free!"

"Goin' to run away and leave yer poor mudder?" said Black Sue, beginning to wring her hands, and to utter a low tone of agony. Jim was deeply affected. His desire to be free struggled hard with his

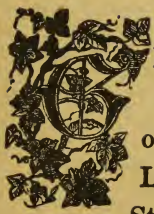
wish to share the fate of his mother, whatever that may be. He finally comforted himself that his mother and sister would share the coming freedom. While this conflict of feeling was going on in their cabin, they were attracted by the voice of prayer in the woods near them. The pious negroes of the plantation were seeking relief to their burdened, troubled spirits in telling their hopes and fears to their heavenly Friend. And just because they did not know whether to fear or rejoice in hope, they were the more earnest to ask God to guide them. As usual, the more they prayed, the larger their number became, and the less cautious they were in the noise they made. Though not a word was uttered except that of prayer for God's mercy and help, the watchful, listening overseer heard, with a jealousy which fear made terrible. The

sudden crack of his whip sent the frightened worshippers to their cabins, like rabbits fleeing from the hunters.

"Reckons God Almighty hears de crack of dat 'ere whip," said a white-headed slave, whose voice in prayer had been long familiar to all the negroes; "reckons he will come and deliver de poor servants by and by."

CHAPTER II.

THE ALARM.



REAT alarm spread through the country, when the fleet of gunboats, sent by President Lincoln to plant the Stars and Stripes in South Carolina, appeared off the coast. The leaders of the rebellion proudly defied the Yankee vessels. No doubt they felt secure behind their great guns and strong forts. But the owners of slaves near the sea-shore did not feel entirely easy, for they well knew that their strongest and best slaves would be likely to leave them,

in spite of all their efforts to keep them under their control, if they should be obliged to flee into the back country. Jim's master watched the war vessels with an agitation he could not conceal. When the guns began to thunder, the excitement passed from one plantation to another, like the flash of electricity over the wires. When the fight with the forts was over, and the loyal army was landed upon their shores, the alarm of the slave owners was hardly greater than that of some of their slaves. The masters knew, in some measure, in what form the danger was coming; but many of the poor, ignorant negroes trembled at the uncertainty of their future condition.

"May be, now," said Sue, as the yellow boys (the few who were left on the plantation) grew bold in their expressions of joy at the success of the gunboats,

"may be, now, poor old Black Sue will be hustled off, de Lord o' massy knows whar, an' Jim and Nance, dey gets liber-ty, an' I never sees 'em more."

The tears stood in Jim's eye when he heard these words of concern from his mother, and saw her face, which clearly expressed her agony of heart. But he brushed away his tears, as the thought again flashed across his mind of attaining freedom for his mother and sister, as well as for himself.

"May be," he exclaimed, "Massa Linkum, when he comes, will cotch Massa Porter! Den whar's all de sarvants? Hi! Dey goes just whar dey please. Hopes dey'll cotch all de white trash like Massa Smith. Dun know what dey'll do wid dem, tho'; specks dey wouldn't pay for cotchin'!"

Black Sue's courage revived somewhat at Jim's hopeful view of the situation.

But she did not see the evils of her condition as a slave, as her son did. The world was very small to her; not much larger than the plantation, from which she had never travelled more than four miles. Her hopes and fears concerned a very few earthly things, and so much of eternal things as her few rays of light brought to view. She trembled at the things she knew not of, more than at those she saw.

It was soon ascertained on the plantation that the overseer was too much concerned for his own safety, now that the Yankees had landed, to watch them as he had done. He was away for days at a time. He left the hands in charge of Jordan, the white-headed, pious negro, whose prayer meeting he had so unceremoniously broken up. Jordan's piety had made him, heretofore, an object of the overseer's especial dislike, though if

there was any work to be done that required faithful care and labor, Jordan was always selected as the man to see it done. So he paid an unwilling compliment to the good old slave's religious character. Now, when the very foundation of things seemed to be giving way, the overseer could think of no one to whom his employer's interests could so safely be committed as to "Uncle Jordan."

"Now, Jordan!" he exclaimed, with much more respect than was customary with him, "you are the man to look after things."

"Yes, sar," replied Jordan.

"Our soldier boys are going to drive all the Yankees into the sea, and Colonel Porter and I are going to see them do it."

"Yes, sar," said Jordan, with a smile so significant that the overseer would have knocked him down and stamped him

under his feet, had it not been for the peculiar state of things.

"Don't let the people be running about, and get excited," continued Smith, quite meekly.

"No, sar," responded Jordan; "dey won't go off dis place, I'll warrant, massa."

Smith's countenance lighted up at this honest and confident assurance, and he added with an effect to laugh, "You shall all have a merry time when we've hung all the Yankees."

"All of 'em dat de soldier boys don't drive into de sea," replied Jordan, his aged form seeming for a moment to be animated with youthful vigor.

Smith tried, or pretended to believe, that the old negro's heart was with the cause of his master. It was not a time to indulge other thoughts, and the overseer repeated, "Keep the people together, Jor-

dan;" and heard, as he mounted his horse to ride away, the earnest, honest reply, "Sartin, I will."

Jordan made haste to fulfil to the letter, the promise which had just escaped his lips. He commanded as one who expected to be obeyed. He ordered every person on the place, men, women, and children, to meet him in the grove back of the group of cabins, where 'the Elder' had occasionally broken to them the "bread of life." The people understood the nature of the summons, and made willing haste. From the fields, the woods, and the stables they hurried to the appointed place. The aged and infirm came creeping along, stimulated by the prevailing excitement; and the mother came with her little one, while the young children scampered ahead, feeling that freedom had already come to them. Jordan mounted

the stand which had been erected for the Elder, and declared the purpose for which they had been called together.

"We are looking for de Lord to come and deliver his poor sarvants dat cry mightily to him!" he exclaimed, with uncovered head, his white locks tossing in the wind. "De hearts of de white folks fails 'em for fear, and dey trembles like de leaf ob de tree;" and the speaker lifted up his eyes to the few dried leaves which had survived the autumn winds, and which now rattled among the branches. "De colored people," continued the old man, "must wait to see what de Lord will do. Does you all hear?" he exclaimed, with a voice which was once powerful, and seemed now to catch some of its former strength. "You must all wait on dis yer place until de Lord come and say, 'Up, get ye out of dis place,' like he say in de old time."

A general shout assured Jordan that all would abide the time of the Lord's coming, and not leave the plantation till then: which meant, that they would wait until "Linkum's men" gave them a chance to flee with safety. Jordan then announced that they would then and there hold a meeting "in de name of de blessed Lord God." He then proceeded to repeat, two lines at a time, the verses of a familiar hymn. There was no fear of the overseer's whip, and it was sung lustily. It was the music of the heart, and made melody unto God. Jordan then led in prayer, bowed upon the rude stand, while his congregation fell upon their knees, some of them burying their faces in their hands and prostrating themselves upon the ground. The prayer was the utterance of a full heart. It confessed the sins, "the drefful sins of all de

people." It implored "dat de masses may see de good and de right way, and turn to de Lord, who will have mercy upon dem." It asked wisdom for "de poor sarvants dat don't know nothin', dat dey may have de blessed freedom."

The prayer was followed by a stumbling reading of God's word, after the songs and prayers, and the people were dismissed, docile in spirit, willing to do the least and last command of Jordan, upon whom they looked as their prophet of the Lord.

CHAPTER III.

THE FLIGHT.

VERY day, for a week, the people on the Porter plantation came together, at the sound of the horn, for prayer, and to hear what words of advice Jordan had concerning their conduct. The invasion by the army from the North, and its consequent alarm, had already scattered many of the slaves of other plantations, while their masters were making every exertion possible to keep them together, and to remove them further from the sea-shore. Not a person left the Porter

plantation. Even the yellow people, who were intensely bent on freedom, waited for Jordan to announce the word of God for their departure.

Jim was greatly affected by the spirit and teaching of Jordan. He began to take a more serious view of the future. The voice of prayer had been common in all the cabins, and Black Sue and her children were bowed, morning and evening, around their newly-erected family altar. None of their number could read the "blessed Word." This was now more than ever a grief to them. They knew many hymns, and these they sung, comforting one another with the truth which they expressed. There was one "yaller boy" who could read, whose cabin was near them. His name was Peter, but he answered to the name of Pete. How Pete had learned to read nobody, except

perhaps a very few, could tell. Pete had the precious treasure of a little pocket Testament. Jim looked at Pete as one belonging wholly to another race. He invited him into his mother's cabin, where he read to eager listeners the words of Christ. Black Sue had begged of Jim the privilege of turning down the leaf of his Testament at the fourteenth chapter of John's gospel. Whenever he came to read, the words, "Let not you heart be troubled," were sure to be called for, whatever else might be read besides. Freedom began to be associated in Sue's mind with the privilege of reading God's Word, for she knew that but few slaves knew how to read. She saw Jim and Nancy as they listened to Pete's reading, and knew that they craved the same privilege. She began to feel that she should be willing to part with them both, if they could not enjoy freedom together.

Pete's reading was greatly prized, but he could not explain the Word to the slaves. When, therefore, Jim and others heard that which they could not understand, they turned over the passages in their minds, discussing them in their simple way. They thus sharpened each other's understanding, and often obtained an insight into the treasures of the Bible, which more highly favored, but less earnest readers, failed to obtain. If Jim could get, at any time, the ears of uncle Jordan, he had some text for him to explain. The old man was very patient and loving in answering all questions, confessing his own ignorance, and recommending them "to ask de Spirit to teach de whole truth."

While the colonel's plantation was thus tasting a measure of freedom, the whole region of country was in commotion.

Jordan felt his responsibility to his fellow-slaves, who looked, with so much confidence, to him for guidance. He was expecting his master and the overseer every day. He kept with them his engagement to the letter. Every slave would be found in his cabin, or at his assigned labor. But he had not engaged that they should always be thus submissive to their yoke of bondage. Jordan knew that hundreds were finding liberty within the extending lines of the Northern army. He knew, too, that the slaveholders were removing all that did not thus run away, beyond the reach of freedom. Looking at all these facts, Jordan gathered the most intelligent of the men of the plantation about him, and discussed with them the question of escape to the Yankee lines. He urged that, as the alarm of the masters had been increasing,

so the chance of escape had been improving. "May be we shall all go to freedom," said the old man, while the tears ran down his face. "But it don't matter much about dis yer old body. Massa had most all ob it. Let de young men and gals go. Dey can larn, and be folks some day, and read de blessed books. If massa carry off some of de people whar Massa Linkum's freedom can't find 'em, den poor old Jordan must go to tell dem about Massa Jesus, who makes de soul free, and takes de poor sarvant one day to de freedom up dar."

Jordan clasped his hands and raised them above his head, and looked upward as he uttered the last sentence, his faith seeming almost to raise him to the serene atmosphere of heaven. His companions agreed to remain until the overseer's return. If an attempt was made to remove

the people of the plantation from the seashore, it would of necessity be made in a hurry, and amidst much confusion. They would then escape, and carry as many of the others as they thought could be done safely.

The waiting for the right moment was not long continued. The raids of loyal cavalry extended almost to their plantation. Colonel Porter and his overseer drove into their midst in hot haste. The countenance of the slaveholder lighted up with the joy of his pleasant disappointment when Jordan assured him that not a slave had left. "My faithful people!" he exclaimed, "I always knew they appreciated my kind treatment, and the good care I have always taken of them. They will all go with me to a place of safety. The Yankees shall not have the chance of spoiling any of my servants."

The colonel made a hasty preparation to depart. He reckoned upon his strong men to make his retreat a success, but, to his great mortification and vexation, they, one after another, disappeared, not from, but towards, the Northern camp. His flattering manners and soft words were changed to the ravings of a wild beast and the oaths of a madman. But it availed nothing. There was no time to put the bloodhounds on the track of the fugitives, and his slaveholding neighbors could not be called to his aid. Jordan, who requested to be permitted to go with those who were to accompany his master, was commanded to remain on the place, with other aged or infirm persons.

In the hurry and confusion, but little attention could be paid to individual stragglers. Black Sue and her children were in great perplexity. The mother

could not be persuaded to take her chance with those who were rushing into the camp of the Yankees. The good sense of Jordan had prepared the minds of all for the trouble which they might expect with their freedom. Jim longed for liberty, and so did Nancy, but both clung to mother.

"Dar, now, Jim," exclaimed the mother, "let me be. "Go 'long, now, an' get freedom! Nance an' I'll go with Massa Porter. May be, now, de good Lord will send Massa Linkum, and cotch Massa Smith, and gin' all de sarvants liberty."

With a full heart, Plantation Jim turned away from mother and sister, and from the place of his birth and childhood, to seek at the hands of the armed strangers the rights which he held dear, even in this, the time of his great ignorance of what belonged to a true man. He plunged

into the woods unnoticed. The yellow men who were best informed concerning the way to the loyal camp had already gone. Jim, for the first moment of his life, was acting for himself.

CHAPTER IV.

JIM CONFISCATED.

JIM learned that the right management of his escape was not altogether easy. Mounted white men were riding in every direction, not in pursuit, to be sure, but in flight; but they were armed, and did not hesitate to shoot down any negro whom they met with his face towards the Yankee camp. Hungry, weary, and intensely excited, Jim pressed cautiously forward towards the sea. His mother and sister were quite as much in his mind as the liberty which he was seeking. At times

he was half inclined to return and share their fate. He was now near the Yankee lines, and must soon decide the question beyond a thought of change. In a perplexed frame of mind he was one morning peeping out of his hiding-place, where he had spent the night, and taking a cautious survey of the situation, when he heard some one say, in a low tone, "Jim, Jim!"

He drew back in great fear, thinking that an enemy had been on his track. But in a moment after "Yaller Jo," one of his master's slaves, sprang forward from behind a tree.

"Tank de Lord, Jo! is dat you?" exclaimed Jim, in great delight.

The two fugitives were more bold now, encouraged by each other's presence. They hid carefully away at the sight of the gray coats of the rebel soldiers, and

eagerly sought to catch a glimpse of the blue coats of their Northern friends. They did not long wait to be gratified in this respect. A foraging party soon made its appearance, commanded by a fine-looking young officer. They did not show themselves till Jim could get a fair look at the captain's face. When he had done this, he saw such an expression of kindness, blended with the determined air of the soldier, that he rushed towards him at once. His reception was not, at first, very much to his wishes.

"Well, boys," said the captain, "what do you want?"

"We wants liberty, sar," answered Jim, with an energy which pleased the captain.

"What are you willing to pay for liberty?" said the captain.

"Dun know, sar," replied Jim, looking

perfectly blank at the question, plainly showing that he did not understand a word of it. Jo, who better understood the captain, answered, —

"We can work, sar. We will do a heap, sar."

"Yes, massa," chimed in Jim, greatly relieved at the light which Jo's answer had let into his mind. "We'll do heaps of work. We'll be faithful sarvants."

"But," said the captain, smiling, "I thought you wanted liberty. Can you work in freedom?"

Jim looked a little puzzled again, but Jo answered promptly: "We'll work right smart, sar. We'll be true to liberty."

One of the men stepped forward with a much more painful question, which he put in a rough, unfeeling way.

"Boys," he exclaimed, "will you help

us shoot your rebel masters? The bloody rascals shot two of our men yesterday. I want to make a dozen of them bite the dust before night."

"We'll work, sar, mighty well," said Jim, timidly. "Dun know nothin' 'bout shootin'. Niggers ain't nothin', no how, to white folks."

The soldier laughed at Jim's answer, and the captain stopped the talk by an order for the men to move forward upon a store of corn, which had just been discovered. He ordered Jim and Jo to help the men in loading the carts, which they did with all the energy which weary and hungry men could well exercise. They all marched into the camp, where our fugitives found many who came on the same errand with themselves, — to find liberty.

The captain into whose hands Jim had

fallen was Captain Austin Goodwin, with whom we have been acquainted in a former story. He was an intelligent and brave soldier; but war had not made him harsh nor inattentive to the sufferers, either white or black, who were so numerous all about him. The good principles which he had been taught in his New England, Christian home, instead of being disregarded since his army life commenced, had ripened into a decided and earnest religious character. He now truly loved the Saviour himself, and labored faithfully to lead others to love him. Captain Goodwin had in his regiment an intimate Christian friend in a Captain Holden. They were both very much loved by their men, and highly respected by their superior officers.

Jim's heart clung at once to the captain, who, on his part, was quite ready to attach Jim to his own person, as his ser-

vant had been for some time sick, with little prospect of recovery. Yaller Jo sought the company of the crowd of contrabands who were hanging about the camp, and Jim soon lost sight of him.

The captain was pleased to learn, by a careful watching of his new servant, that his profession of willingness to work "right smart," was true. He was very ignorant, of course, often making great and annoying blunders, which put the captain to great inconvenience, yet his kindness of heart and good nature never failed. But his intense desire to learn, and to be "like white folks," more than anything excited the interest of those about him. The captain was kept so much in active service, that Jim's desire to learn to read could not possibly be gratified at present. The prayer-meetings occasionally held in the captain's tent, were seasons (though

conducted very differently) which reminded Jim of the gatherings for prayer under his faithful friend Jordan. He listened to the singing, the prayers, the reading of the Bible, and to every word that was spoken, with the eagerness that a hungry man feels in partaking of a plentiful meal. One day, while enjoying an hour or two of leisure, Captain Goodwin drew Jim into a conversation about his former condition, and his hopes and plans concerning the future.

"Where's your master, Jim?" said the captain.

"Dun know, massa," said Jim. "I 'spects he's run'd away."

"And you ran away, too?"

Jim smiled, and said, "Mighty mean white folks all round, shootin' niggers dat didn't go off wid dar massas."

"Had you father or mother, Jim, or any brothers or sisters?"

"Sartin, cap'n; Black Sue and Nance," replied Jim, wiping the tears from his face.

The captain did not press his questions in this direction, except to ascertain that Black Sue was his mother and Nance his sister Nancy. He kindly reminded Jim that boys in freedom did not speak of a mother or sister by such names, and that he must say mother and sister.

"Sartin, I will," said Jim; and, to his credit, the captain noted that he never heard him say "Black Sue" nor "Nance" afterwards.

A letter lay before the captain from his sister Gracie and from his mother, both of whom had spoken tenderly of the home of his childhood in the Mountain region, and of the affection which was cherished there for the "soldier brother." He had just read this letter for the fourth

time, and he felt a peculiar sympathy for Jim, who was standing before him, for whom there could be no letter from mother and sister.

"Jim," he said, breaking the silence of some minutes, "should you like to go with me, some day, to my New England home!"

Jim's face was instantly in a glow. His strong frame fairly shook with emotion as he replied, —

"Yes, please, cap'n, and learn to be like white folks."

CHAPTER V.

JIM'S ANGEL.

CAPTAIN GOODWIN felt, more than he chose to express to Jim, when he spoke of carrying him to his Northern home, how uncertain were the events of the morrow. Every day impressed him that war brings sudden and great changes. But he was very glad to learn that these changes were not always painful. In a few weeks after his talk with Jim, his regiment was ordered on board a transport. Jim accompanied the captain with great satisfaction, although he

was frankly told that he might be going farther from the coveted land of liberty. It was enough for him to know that "Massa Cap'n" was going. But poor Jim was soon subjected to a trouble much less serious than it was new and annoying. He was genuinely sea-sick. He tumbled about among the soldiers, who cruelly mocked his sufferings, feeling wholly indifferent as to whether he was going North or South, and, for once, losing all interest in either freedom or his good friend the captain. But he was soon himself again, and seemed to make up for his late indifference by an unusually careful attention.

"I reckons," said Jim, in one of his happy moods, "that we's goin' straight for liberty!"

"What makes you think so?" inquired the captain.

"'Cause, sar, I feels so happy," ex-

claimed Jim, with great satisfaction, thinking that he had given a good answer.

The captain did not think that Jim's feelings were any proof that he should get within easy communication with his New England home. But such was the fact. His regiment was landed in Virginia, the scene now of bloody fighting. They immediately joined their comrades in the field, and shared in the fierce contest. For weeks they were in the midst of the most intense excitement, being either actually fighting, or in hourly expectation of meeting the enemy. Though much exposed, Captain Goodwin escaped unharmed by the shot of the battle-field; but when his regiment was ordered to the camp at Point Lookout his health gave way. He went into the hospital, where the faithful and devoted Jim waited at his

bedside with a loving interest. During this time, nothing affected Jim more than the frequent reception of letters by the captain from his mother and sister. He heard much of their contents read with tears streaming down his face.

"White folks is allers at home," he remarked, feelingly, on one of these occasions.

"What do you mean, Jim?" said the captain.

"'Cause you talks wid your folks eny day. If dis poor Jim could hab de letters from mudder and Nancy way down Dixie dar! Hi! reckons how he'd dance!"

The captain turned the conversation, by remarking that all white soldiers did not get letters from home, and that some of them were no better off than the colored boys.

"Hospital service," as the captain called his confinement to his cot, was more wearing to his patience than marches or battles had been, and his letters to the home friends were quite desponding. One day, when he was complaining to his friend, Captain Holden, of extreme weariness, and confessing that he was homesick, his sister Gracie presented herself to him. The surprise to the brother was perfect, and the joy of their meeting very great. Jim's fountain of tears was open again, for he thought of Nancy, and how glad his heart would be made at such a meeting with her. Gracie had travelled alone from her Mountain region home, and her presence and skilful nursing soon restored her brother. Her kind heart turned tenderly to her brother's servant boy, and in his eye she needed only wings to be an angel.

Soon after his recovery, Captain Goodwin and Captain Holden returned to their New England homes on a furlough, and Gracie remained as a nurse in the hospital. Jim shared largely in her kind offices, while no service he could render her was reluctantly rendered. He commenced at once, under her instruction, to learn to read. He had picked up a knowledge of the most of the letters of the alphabet, and in a few days commenced spelling out easy words. The agents of the Christian Commission were scattering among the soldiers their tracts, among which was some easy reading for the beginners among the colored people. One day, after Jim had been a short time drilled by his teacher in words of two syllables, a little tract primer was handed him. His eyes at once shone with delight at the idea of reading it without assist-

ance. He was, at the moment, in the midst of his duties to the officer to whom his service had, in part, been transferred. He put the prize in his big pocket, and with difficulty gave his attention to the officer's requirements. When the welcome word was uttered, "Jim, you may go to Miss Gracie," he shot out of the tent like a bird from the cage. Miss Gracie, as he expected, was content for him to sit down within call. He drew the primer from his pocket with much the same feeling that a miser would open a casket of newly-obtained jewels. The first lessons consisted of short Scripture verses. He spelled slowly: G-o-d, God; i-s, is; l-o-v-e, love.

"God is love!" exclaimed Jim, delighted that he had not only read the words, but that he understood what they meant. The next sentence was, "Thou God seest

me." This he spelled out readily, and understood its truth. He went on reading, "The Lord is good to all," "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," and "Jesus died for all." When he had read to the bottom of the page, and mastered nearly every word, he laid down the book, and sprang to his feet in an ecstasy of joy. Gracie, seeing his wild expressions, approached him, saying, —

"What's the matter, Jim? What have you found that makes you so nappy?"

"O, Missus Gracie!" shouted Jim, dancing about, much to the amusement of the soldiers, who were standing near, "I dun reads it all myself. Jim ain't a nigger no more!"

In fact, life had a greener look to Jim from this time, and he had a fresher feeling of manhood.

Gracie took him by the hand, and led him to a more private place, and made him sit by her side. It was a good time, she thought, to commence the difficult task of connecting his mode of speech, which is so intimately connected with the improvement of the head and heart.

"You are pleased that you can read?" she commenced; "and you want to be like the good white people?"

"Sartin," said Jim, emphatically.

"Certain," repeated Gracie; "not 'sartin.' Boys — colored boys — who become like white people, do not talk like the poor slaves on the plantation who cannot read."

Jim was rather dashed by this reminder that he had not yet climbed greatly above the level of poor niggers. He repeated, very meekly and slowly, after Gracie, the word Certain.

"Dat's mighty nice — a heap better, Missus," he exclaimed, when he had succeeded in jerking out Certain.

"You must not say 'dat,' but 'that,'" said Gracie.

This was a harder exercise; but Jim went on repeating it bravely, until his organs of speech seemed to be growing more flexible.

"Now," said Gracie, "I will give you but one more lesson at this time. You need not say 'Missus,' nor Mistress, either, when you speak to me. Say Miss Gracie. That is what all white people say."

"S–a–r — certain!" exclaimed Jim, with an emphasis which showed that his will was in his efforts to master the lessons which had been given him.

From this time Jim was constantly repeating, cer, cer, c-e-r-t-a-i-n, certain, t-h-a-t, that, and other more common "nigger talk," as he now sneeringly called

it. Every correction was a triumph which lifted him up in his self-respect. He was, at the same time, making fine progress in his primer under Gracie's daily instruction. It was full of precious truths concerning the Saviour, so that while he was learning to read, his heart was being drawn to Him.

Another subject of Gracie's special care was George Ray, a rebel soldier boy, whose right arm had been shot away in the bad cause of the rebellion. Her first approaches to him, as he lay, pale and suffering, upon his cot, were repelled. But her kind attention won his confidence, and her words of Christian love deeply impressed his heart. But Jim looked upon the wounded rebel with disgust, if not hate. When he saw him treat Gracie with disrespect, he could not refrain from expressing his indignation.

"Poor white trash!" he muttered. "Reckons he'd better die. Sich ain't no 'count, no how. Spects, though, da go to de bad place if da dies."

It at first vexed Jim that Gracie should waste her kind attentions upon so ungrateful a wretch. But Gracie completely checked all intimations of this kind from him, by gently reminding him that her colored boy had required her patience. But when Jim saw the change which took place in George, his gratitude often expressed in tears, his evident love for Gracie not exceeded by that of his own, and the respectful way in which he began to speak of the Yankees whom he had despised, his admiration of Gracie knew no bounds.

"Miss Gracie is wonderful!" he exclaimed, in his improved speech. "Certain now she be an angel!"

CHAPTER VI.

A NEW FREEDOM.

HEN Captain Goodwin and Captain Holden returned from their visit among the home friends, they found the camp full of activity. The rebels were causing great excitement, and their regiment was soon ordered to the front. It was thought best for Gracie to take Jim, and go to the home at Mountain Side. Jim was delighted, especially at the thought of being Gracie's protector. There was danger, now, that he might rise too fast in his own estimation; but "his

angel" kept him faithfully reminded of his imperfections, by a constant correction of his style of speaking, and errors of temper and conduct. She carefully impressed upon him, too, the teachings of the Bible, the easy portions of which he was learning to read with some readiness.

Gracie's brother had interested a friend in George Ray, the rebel soldier boy. This friend was going to Port Royal, where George's mother was thought to be, and promised to try to find her, and to convey to her a letter from her son. This he succeeded in doing, and Gracie had the pleasure, when she and Jim left the hospital, of leaving George in the care of his mother, who had come thus far North for that purpose.

When Jim reached the home of Gracie, that home which he had seen, even when he first became acquainted with

Captain Goodwin, in a kind of vision, his heart overflowed with joy. Gracie's widowed mother was, in his sight, another angel, and her younger brother, Gillie, a right smart, good boy.

Gracie had been engaged, before she went to Point Lookout, in business in the town, not far off. To this she soon returned, leaving Jim in the care of her mother and Gillie. Mrs. Goodwin had a small farm, most of the work of which her son did, though he attended school in the winter. Jim at once engaged in the farm-work with him. He soon found that his new freedom was costing him something. The farm was located among the hills, and was, like most New England land, rocky, and hard to cultivate. It was very unlike the soil of the Southern cotton fields which Jim had ploughed and hoed. "This is awful mean land" (he

had got rid of the 'dis'), he said to Gillie one day, as he sweat in endeavoring to keep up in his work with his Yankee companion.

"Wait, Jim, until harvest time," said Gillie, "and see what crops we get from it."

But Jim's faithful friend, Gracie, had prepared his mind for the hard work of her native Mountain region. She had, in part, at least, opened his eyes to the true value of freedom. He pretty well understood that it did not consist in possessing much and doing nothing. His good sense had suggested to him, before he left Point Lookout, that there was a great difference in the working habits of Gracie and the young white women of the South. He saw everybody at work in the region where he now lived; and, although he felt that he had scarcely known what work was before, he enjoyed every moment

of it. It was now the early spring, yet Gillie found some leisure to help him a little in his efforts to learn. This gave an inspiration to his working hours. But this was not all. Gillie made him fully acquainted with his own habit of working summers, and going to school winters. Jim was promised that he should have this privilege if he worked faithfully during the summer and fall, and improved his leisure time well in getting a good start in plain reading. Jim needed no spurring to do this. He took, during this working season, short lessons from Gillie in writing. This, to him, was a great step upward. He longed for the time when he should be able to write to his mother and sister, and his simple faith assured him that when that time came, there would be a way opened for them to receive and read his letter.

Jim's new freedom had its great blessings. Gracie led him to the Sunday school soon after her return North. She was at home occasionally to encourage him. She had secured for him a teacher in whom she had confidence. His name was Rodney Dennis. Rodney was quite young, and timid, but his excellent sense, good scholarship, and more especially his excellent character, had led the school committee to engage him to teach the school the following winter. He was studying hard during the week, but did not neglect to prepare carefully to meet his class of boys on the Sabbath. At first, his boys resented having the poor colored boy join the class; but their teacher's respect and love for Jim made them ashamed of this feeling. He explained to them, before Jim took his seat in their midst, the terrible wrongs which he had suffered in

slavery, his noble struggles to make himself a man since he had found freedom, and they voted him their confidence at once. No boy of the school heard with greater attention and gladness all that his teacher told him of Christ. None committed to memory more perfectly the Scripture lesson. The singing and the happy faces of all the children made the school-room seem like heaven to his thankful heart. One Sunday, after Jim had been unusually interested in his Sunday lesson, and the school was closing with one of the children's sweetest songs, Rodney noticed that the tears were flowing freely down Jim's face. Rodney inquired, in a whisper, why he cried.

"I am thinking," said Jim, tenderly, "where s my mother and sister."

CHAPTER VII.

THE HARVEST.

NEW ENGLAND harvest-season was to Jim a wonder. Cotton was the one thing he had been in the habit of gathering. Sweet potatoes and corn made some part of his master's harvesting; but Jim had never known any work in the fall except cotton picking. With the apple gathering he was delighted. His eyes glistened with joy at the full barrels of "Number One's," and he climbed about the branches to pick them with great glee. When

sent into the top of a cider apple tree, to shake it, he laughed uproariously to see them showered upon the ground, especially if they fell on Gillie's head. The cider-press became much more attractive to him than the cotton-press had ever been. The new cider, Jim "reckoned," was better than his Master Porter's brandy; but he confessed that colored folks didn't get treated in Dixie with that article, so he wasn't sure about it. Gillie was careful to explain to him that cider would not be good for him when it was old, and that his mother did not keep it in her house then. Jim looked sorry that sweet cider did not last all the year.

Digging potatoes was not after Jim's mind at all. He declared it was "awful mean business." Corn gathering he liked better, but he thought the ears small, and the stalks "nothin' no how." But when

he saw the corn piled on the barn floor, the mows full of hay, the good supply of vegetables in the cellar, the grain and apples in the grain-house, he sat down by the kitchen fire with Gillie, and talked of the summer's toil and fall harvesting with real satisfaction. The farming had not been done on a large scale, for the two boys had done the most of it, but it had yielded a good return. The last, and pleasantest item of the fall work, was the husking. The Mountain region retained the pleasant old practice of making a social party on the occasion. Mrs. Goodwin's corn heap was not very large, nor the number of the friends invited very numerous, but it was a very select company, select, not for their wealth, but for the love they entertained for each other. Rodney Dennis, and his cousin, Chester Florence, were there. Gracie came home

from town, and brought Carrie Prince, and a new, but now dear friend, by the name of Mary Curtis. Mary's little brother, Johnny, a boy four years old, came too, by Gracie's very special invitation. All were happy, but Carrie Prince seemed, if possible, more so than any other one. She had a pleasant voice for singing, and, while the work was going on, she warbled several beautiful and melting patriotic songs. Rodney, the newly-elected school teacher, was retiring, and seemed to Carrie to be unsocial. She whispered her fear of him to Gracie, saying, —

"How stiff our Rodney is! ain't he dignified, too! He'll think I'm a regular rattle-brain."

But Carrie misunderstood Rodney. None were happier than he when others were full of joy, for he lived for others;

and if he could not chat freely, his cousin Chester could talk enough for both of them. Gracie shared largely Chester's attention, while he made the ears of corn go into the basket with great rapidity. Little Johnny climbed up on the corn heap, and slid down again; he went from one basket to another to pick out the red ears; and when the rest laughed (which was quite often), he laughed too, whether he knew what it was for, or not. His sister Mary looked round upon the company with great gratitude. A few months before, she had gone into the mill to work, a stranger in the great town, and almost friendless in the world, with her little brother, as well as herself, to provide for. Now she looked upon all this pleasant group as her friends, and fondly regarded Carrie as her dear sister. She did not make herself forward in talking, but her

heart was full of gratitude. Mounted a little above the rest, on the rounds of a ladder which stood against the hay-mow, was Jim. His intense interest in the company, and in all the pleasant things which were spoken, made him, for the moment, forget there was anything to do. Little Johnny was not more delighted with the occasion. All the company were right smart, in his estimation, but his "Miss Gracie" still excelled them all. He remained for some time on the ladder in a reverie of delight, until Chester began, playfully, to pelt him with small, refuse pieces of corn. Jim received these hints, and dropped into his place, and resumed his work at husking.

It was not late when the husking was done, and the party went into the house and partook of Mrs. Goodwin's supper. It was such a repast as only a New Eng-

land farming region could produce, and the company were in the mood to do ample justice to it.

A game of "blind-man's-buff," a few songs, in which Carrie Prince led with her sweet voice, and a general, pleasant chat, and the happy company broke up.

"I owe the happy hours to you," whispered Mary to Carrie, when they were left alone with the Goodwin family.

"And I owe them to dear Gracie!" exclaimed Carrie, with deep feeling.

"And this colored boy owes them to Captain Austin and Gracie," chimed in Jim, with a sincerity which none could question.

"And we all owe them to the kind care of our heavenly Father," said Mrs. Goodwin, as she opened the Bible, to close the evening with the usual family devotions.

CHAPTER VIII.

JIM AT SCHOOL.

ODNEY DENNIS was the teacher of the winter school in the Mountain region, which commenced soon after Thanksgiving. Jim felt that a new era in his life had commenced, when, on Monday morning, he took his seat in the school-room with the other scholars. He was too intensely interested in his teacher, and in his purpose to obtain a white boy's learning, to notice the curious eyes which were constantly fixed upon him. There had never been a

colored boy in the district before; and although the most of the scholars had made his acquaintance during the summer, a few had not before seen him, and all regarded his presence in the school as a curious circumstance.

Jim commenced the term in the class of boys of eight and nine years of age. To the thoughtless scholars, it was a funny sight to see him standing up to read with boys no taller than his shoulders. But Jim was happily unconscious of the awkward position. He bravely persevered, studying his lessons every moment in school, and repeating much of them over to himself while doing his morning and evening work at home. Gillie was ever ready to help him; and his teacher watched his progress with a truly brotherly interest. For a short time things went smoothly and happily

with him. Liberty had come, and it more than fulfilled the dreamy hopes of his days of slavery. But trials came from a source wholly unexpected. He was playing, one recess, with the boys. The first snow of the season had just fallen. It was slightly moist, making excellent snow-balls, and the boys were snow-balling each other with a merry earnestness. Jim, though he had never seen the sport before, entered into it heartily. His vigorous arm made his balls tell upon those receiving them. Reuben Jones received one of them in the side of the head. It did not hurt him, but filled, for the moment, his ear and hair with snow, and caused a loud laugh, at his expense, from the boys.

"You mean nigger, you!" exclaimed Reuben; "I'll pay you for that!"

Jim noticed but for a moment the re-

mark, and plunged into the thickest of the mock-fight. Reuben made a snow-ball hard as possible, wetting it at the pump, so that it was really a ball of ice, as hurtful, almost, as a stone. Watching his opportunity to take his victim unawares, Reuben threw it at Jim, hitting him on the back, and knocking, for the moment, the breath from him. Had it hit him, as it was intended, in the head, the consequences might have been very serious. As it was, Jim soon recovered, and, turning upon Reuben, he tumbled him into the snow, and pelted him with soft snow-balls, as he had often seen the scholars do to each other. But Reuben was in no mood for play, either fair or foul, and he cried out, like one attacked by a highway robber. The snow-balling among the scholars ceased, and the cry was raised, "A fight! a fight!" At this mo-

ment the teacher's bell rang, and the scholars hurried into the school-room. Reuben, however, crept home, to make his complaints to his father, Squire Jones, the committee-man. The teacher inquired for Reuben, and received a confused account of the incident which had caused him to go home.

"It's just as I told you, Parson Morrell," said Squire Jones to the chairman of the committee, whom he visited that evening. "There's no order in our school. What could you expect when you spend our money in hiring a boy to teach? It beats all how things are a-going. The master has taken a nigger into the school, and put him into a class with our white boys. Think of that, sir! Besides, sir, the nigger has had the audacity to snowball my boy! Yes, sir, he has snowballed my boy, and I won't stand it, sir!"

Mr. Morrell replied, that the affair would be inquired into; but quietly added, that he hoped the squire would not take exceptions to the presence, in that school, of a poor, emancipated colored boy, who seemed desirous to make himself a man; and added, "My little Nellie is in the same class with him, and is quite proud of her classmate."

"Shocking taste, sir," said the squire; "but the times ain't now as they used to be, when niggers were made to know their place."

A careful inquiry by the teacher and Mr. Morrell into the snow-balling incident, of which the squire complained, fully acquitted Jim. The popular feeling, too, among the children, was all in his favor, though his feelings were frequently hurt, and his patience taxed, by taunts in reference to the color of his skin.

But nothing more cut Jim's sense of honor, and excited his resentment more, than the occasional reproaches from thoughtless schoolmates at his being classed with the children in his studies. "The baby scholar," or, "You're in the baby class," were expressions which would make him show fight. But the kind words of Rodney, and the visits of "angel Gracie," turned all these trials to his advantage. These kind friends pointed out the true way of resenting low prejudices and unjust reproaches.

"Shame them," said Gracie, "by showing them how smart and good a colored boy can be, who has not had half their advantages!"

"I will, Miss Gracie," said Jim, with his countenance aglow.

Jim was true to this promise. Squire Jones blushed when Jim received, at the

close of the examination, the prize for the greatest improvement. He had graduated from the baby class, and was well started in the study of geography and arithmetic, and was making stumbling, but promising efforts at composition.

"I shall write to mother and Nancy by and by," said Jim, with a full heart.

CHAPTER IX.

JIM'S LIBERTY COMPLETE.

ENVIOUS boys said that when Jim received the prize for the greatest improvement, he felt "grand." It could not be denied by his most partial friends that he did feel "nicely." He did not exactly understand his own case. The teacher and committee had decided that he had made the greatest improvement, but they had not said how little he knew when he commenced the term, nor how little he knew now. He had won a prize, and he felt that he knew, therefore,

a great deal. This caused him to put on airs, which excited the ill will of the scholars who were his friends. This fact became so plain that it was generally allowed, and was the occasion of much talk.

"Didn't I tell you you'd spoil that nigger?" said Squire Jones, with a self-satisfied air. "It ain't no use to try to make anything of sich boys. Keep 'em in their place. Them's my sentiments."

This remark was made to young Nathan Hodges. It roused Nathan's indignation. Nathan was a warm-hearted, intelligent, thrifty man. He was always found on the side of those who were down, and were making an honest effort to rise.

"Squire," said Nathan, looking the hard-hearted pretender full in the face, "Squire, do have a little charity. It's a

great grace. Can't make anything of Jim, a lad just out of bondage, after trying five months! that is, after his friends have tried that time, while you have watched for his halting!

"Squire!" added Nathan, with increased excitement, "when the boy Jim has lived half as long, and had half the privileges that you and I have had, he'll know more and live better, I'm thinking."

"Well, well, Nathan," said the Squire, thrusting his hands violently into his pockets, and walking away, "you always were real ultra."

Fortunately for Jim he had true friends. Rodney, from the first his Sunday-school teacher, explained to him, when he saw the effect of the prize upon him, what it meant. He plainly reminded Jim how much he had yet to learn, and how much behind boys of his own age, in education,

he must necessarily be. He showed him the evil effect of his airs, and how very foolish they were. Jim saw it all now, and wept very freely.

"I'm a very silly — " He was going to say "nigger," for he felt greatly humbled, but he checked himself, and said, "I'm a very silly boy. It ain't any use to try to be good and smart."

Rodney smiled at Jim's mixing up of things, and said, —

"Try, Jim, to be good and do good, and never mind 'the smart.'"

"I'll try," said Jim, planting his foot down, by way of emphasis.

Rodney, and Gracie, when she was at Mountain Side, were thus leading Jim a step higher in the conflict of life. He continued, when the farm work commenced, and he was busy during the day, to study every leisure evening. With

a never-tiring determination to learn to write a letter, he blundered along with his composition. His kind friend Gillie, with much of his sister Gracie's spirit, patiently corrected his errors in spelling, pointing, and rightly using the capitals. When his manuscript was returned to him corrected, he would very carefully copy it all. His ebony face would light up with a smile at its improved appearance, and he would encourage himself by saying, "This boy will fetch that letter-writing by and by."

While thus improving his mind, not only by study, but by living with those whose society instructed him, Jim was learning that which was even of more importance to him, — he was learning to be a true Christian. No scholar of the Sunday school studied his Bible lesson more faithfully. He now understood, as

never before, many truths which he remembered to have heard "Uncle Jordan" speak during the exciting times just before his escape. As his heart warmed with Christian love, his natural affection became more intense. Now, oftener than ever, he exclaimed, "O, that mother and Nancy could have freedom with me!" They were his constant theme of conversation. He did not know that his "angel Gracie" had for many months, through an acquaintance, who was an agent of the Christian Commission at Port Royal, been urging inquiries about the slaves of Colonel Lawrence Porter. The agent at last wrote that there was, among the pious negroes, a very noted old man, whom they called "Uncle Jordan," and who once belonged to Colonel Porter. The writer had not seen Jordan, but would hunt him up, and find out what

he knew concerning Jim's loved ones. The trail was found by which the fugitives might be tracked. Gracie kept all this a secret until certain information could be obtained. When the agent at last wrote that Uncle Jordan was found, and that he had Black Sue and Nance under his care, and that they were diligently at work within the loyal lines, the good news was communicated to Jim. His joy knew no bounds. He jumped and shouted, cried and laughed, by turns. When his excitement was a little subsided, he sat down and wrote them a long letter! yes, a letter, in a plain hand, in tolerably correct language, spelling, and composition, by their own Jim, in which his full heart was unburdened, and his sheet wet with tears. Plantation Jim had become James Goodwin (for he insisted on exchanging his master's for his deliver

er's name), and had learned to read, and "cipher," and, best of all, had learned to truly love the Saviour; and, finally, had spoken once more to his mother and sister. He felt that his liberty was complete. But after he had sent his letter off, and the first excitement of his joy was abated, he began to think more seriously of the situation of his mother and sister. "Jim's liberty has come, sure enough," he said to himself, "but mother and Nancy ain't got freedom that's any account. I reckons, now, this boy will help them to be somebody like he is."

Full of these good purposes, Jim sought the first opportunity to talk about them to his good friends, Rodney Dennis and Nathan Hodges. Rodney heard his expressions of concern about the "mean liberty down in Dixie," with a serious interest. "Now, Mr. Dennis," said Jim,

growing warm on the subject, "I'm going to earn money, and send for my folks to come to Yankee land. I'll have the money in no time. Then Nancy will be a smart scholar, and get a prize, too, and we'll all be like white folks."

Rodney smiled at Jim's enthusiasm, but inquired how he expected to earn the money for their expenses in coming to New England, and what they would all do when they were reunited. Jim became quite serious at these questions. He had not very definitely considered how his good deeds were to be done. Rodney suggested that he must continue to work diligently on the farm, and improve his leisure hours in study, and wait for the favorable opportunity to carry out his benevolent purposes.

When Jim obtained a leisure evening to visit Nathan Hodges, he found that

Rodney had already spoken a good word in his favor, and that Mr. Hodges had a nice place for him all matured.

"I tell you what, boy," said Nathan, in his plain way, "a boy ought to have a trade. Then he will always have a good way of getting an honest living. How would you like to be a blacksmith?"

"First rate, if I can make a heap of money," said Jim.

"Well, I've spoken to a good friend in town. He will do well by you, if you will do well for yourself."

"I'll go to-morrow," replied Jim, earnestly.

CHAPTER X.

WORKING FOR AN OBJECT.

MR. HODGES arranged the plan proposed of having Jim learn a blacksmith's trade. Mrs. Goodwin and the blacksmith in town came readily into it, and Jim put on his leathern apron, and went to work at the anvil with a hearty good will. Every stroke of the sledge seemed to ring out "reunion, reunion!" varied by the equally pleasant sound, "a home! a home!"

Leaving Jim at his manly toil, we will glance at his mother and sister. The

road to freedom had, with them, been very rough. After Jim had turned his face towards the loyal lines, they had been hurried by their master into the interior. But the raids of the Northern soldiers reached their place of retreat. Early one morning a foraging party made a dash at the plantation on which their master had hoped they would be secure. The white people fled in dismay. The negroes followed the soldiers towards the sea-shore. The road was crowded with such fugitives, and their sufferings were great. Weary and hungry, and trembling with the uncertainty of what lay before them, Black Sue and Nancy arrived within the loyal lines. The mother would have preferred the certainties of her former state, with all its unpaid toil, to the untried life of freedom, but for the misty hope she indulged in of seeing again her boy Jim;

and they both continued true to this hope, under sufferings intensely trying to their endurance. One evening, as they were shyly lingering about the camp, Nancy heard the voice of prayer. She went back immediately for mother, and they crept near to the tent from which the sound came. It was a prayer-meeting, led by a pious soldier. Their singing and exhortation melted the hearts of the listeners, and both threw themselves upon the ground, and caught eagerly every word. When it closed, Sue whispered to Nancy, "Dem's de kind of white folks dat will help us poor niggers." Nancy took the hint, and led the way to the door of the tent. They found in the pious soldier what they much needed — tender sympathy. He led them to an agent of the Christian Commission, who directed them into a part of the liberated territory,

where an effort was being made to organize the freed people into companies for their own support and instruction. Much to their joy, they soon learned that their old friend Jordan had already found his way into this section. He had at once set the example to his colored friends of labor, and was already highly esteemed by his white friends for his good influence over the negroes. "Bless de Lord, da comes!" he exclaimed, when he saw Sue and Nancy. "By and by all old massa's servants find freedom." The good old man soon became a centre of religious influence among the freedmen, and extensively known among the white religious teachers. Here, for many weary months, our fugitives toiled, encouraged by Jordan to hope, that "de good Lord would bring dem, by and by, to dare Joseph; for," he added, with enthusiastic

emphasis, "he be sent ahead to get de corn and de home all ready."

Among those who had come from the North to teach the colored people, was Miss Nettie Shaw, a friend of Gracie Goodwin. Gracie had appended to one of her affectionate letters this earnest request: "I beg you, dear Nettie, to do me a favor. Find 'Black Sue,' and her daughter 'Nance,' the mother and sister of our negro boy, Jim. They were the slaves of Colonel Lawrence Porter. Now, if it is not too much like looking for a needle in a haymow, please search them out."

"There's our pious uncle Jordan," mused Nettie, laying down the letter. "He will know the servants of Colonel Porter, if any one does." Nettie, after some delay, found Jordan, to whom she put the questions concerning Colonel Porter.

"Know Massa Porter!" exclaimed Jordan; "why, bless you, missus, dis old nigger hab de care of his place when de Linkum gunboats scare him off."

"You know Black Sue and Nance?"

"Why, course I know dem. Da is here. Why you ask, missus?"

The old man, as he put this question, threw up his hands, with a countenance glowing with excitement, anticipating the answer.

"Sue's boy, Jim, would like to know where they are."

"Bless de Lord, I tell em so!" exclaimed Jordan, hurrying off, to make the mother and sister happy by the news.

When, in due time, the letter came from Jim, their cup of joy needed but one addition, and that was the reunion with him who wrote it. Nettie now took them under her special instruction. En-

couraged by Jim's example, and the assurance that he was working for the reunion and a home, the mother and sister entered upon a new life. Nancy learned rapidly to read and write, and even her mother caught the prevailing desire to learn to read. "Hi!" she exclaimed, "won't Jim open dem big eyes when he go to read to his poor old mudder, and I say, 'Get out, dar; I read it my own self?'" Resolved to do their part in earning the means of their removal, they toiled early and late. The months seemed very long, as the seasons came and went. At times Sue's heart would faint while she despondingly listened to the stories of the varying fortunes of the battle-field. "I nebber see him in dis world!" she would exclaim, burying her face in her hand. But the letters, the faithful messengers of the son's love and unceasing

labor for her, stimulated her flagging courage.

We shall tell how this reunion was brought about, and where the home was located, for which three faithful hearts were yearning, in our story of "The Prairie Boys," a later volume of "The Rustic Library."

RIGHT,

AND

ABOUT RIGHT:

OR

THE BOY ON THE FARM.

NEW YORK
HURST AND COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

A WORD TO THE READER.

The Casket Library is intended to teach great principles, in a familiar style.

The *truths* it contains, we are certain, will be considered *Jewels*, by every right-minded person. Whether all will think the *Casket* worthy of them, we cannot tell. Sure the author is, that he has desired so to exhibit his treasures to the eye, and recommend them to the heart,—of the young, that they may love and obtain them. He is willing they should throw the *Casket* away if they will keep the *Jewels*.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I. PAGE

"Only a Few." 7

CHAPTER II.

The Mother's Talk with her Son 13

CHAPTER III.

Brave Conduct 19

CHAPTER IV.

Ben Riley and the Mason Family 25

CHAPTER V.

John, a Young Farmer 38

CHAPTER VI.

Winter Employment 41

CHAPTER VII.

The Plot 55

CHAPTER VIII.

What One can Do 73

CHAPTER IX.

An Agreeable Surprise 84

RIGHT, AND ABOUT RIGHT.

CHAPTER I.

"ONLY A FEW."

NE cold October afternoon, a ruddy-looking lad walked with an air of disappointment and sadness from an orchard of richly laden trees. He was thinly clad, but he seemed not to mind the penetrating wind which tossed the rustling leaves into fluttering heaps in his path; nor did he heed the quick chattering of the few remaining birds which lingered around the seedy and withered plants. His way lay by an old orchard of neglected trees, where many bushels of apples remained ungathered. Pausing for a moment, as if doubting

the rightfulness of the act, he sprang over, shook vigorously the nearest tree, and, filling his hat and handkerchief, quickly disappeared down the lane.

"Well, John," said his mother, as he entered the door, "so Mr. Mason has been generous for once, and given you a fine lot of apples."

"Surely," she continued, without waiting for an answer, "he is becoming more thoughtful of us poor folks, who have not the abundance with which his store-houses are filled."

John looked blank, and remained silent. The quick eye of his mother detected his embarrassment, and she said, in a decided tone,

"You surely did not take them, John, without permission."

"I more than earned them," was the ready reply.

"O, then," answered his mother, with a brightening countenance, "you have earned them by working for Mr. Mason?"

But John's countenance did not glow with the self-approval that it was accustomed to do. His mother saw this, and said seriously

"Come, my son, tell me all about it."

John Jacobs would not tell a lie. He knew what was right, for his parents were Christians, and taught him to fear God.

"I will, mother," answered John, bravely, "tell you all, and then I am sure you will say the apples are honestly mine. I was at play this afternoon, near Mr. Mason's orchard. James Fisher and Henry Mead were with me. Otis Mason, and old Mr. Mason, his father, and Ben Riley, the hired man, were gathering apples. Mr. Mason called us and said, 'Come, boys, you like to pick up apples, I know. See how Ben showers them down from the trees. Go at

it, my lads, and you shall not be losers. So we went to work with all our might James climbed the trees with Ben, and shook the limbs, and Henry and I filled several barrels. When they had filled the last basket, Mr. Mason walked away. He did not give us a single apple. Henry Mead said it was just like him, but he knew how to work it; and he, and James, and Ben, laughed. But I felt real bad. I wanted some for Thanksgiving, for I know father will not be able to buy any this year, at the high price. Mr. Mason has done so before, and he never remembers such promises."

"And so Ben Riley paid you," interrupted his mother, "Ben paid you with what was not his own."

"No," answered John; "as I turned down by the old orchard, I saw bushels of apples which no one cares for but grandfather Mason. So I thought I might *take*

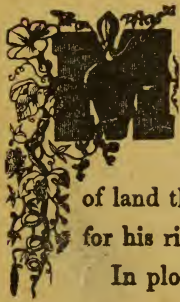
my pay. I am sure I ought to have had better apples than these, and more."

As he spoke, he opened his handkerchief, and showed his mother the inferior fruit.

Mrs. Jacobs made no reply, only remarking, that he had better put them away where they would not be used.

CHAPTER II.

THE MOTHER'S TALK WITH HER SON.



R. AND MRS. JACOBS were very pious people. They lived in a little cottage. Mr. Jacobs cultivated a small piece of land that he owned, besides working for his richer neighbors.

In ploughing this, he used the noble two-horse team, which he was employed to drive for them, on their own farms On these occasions, he allowed John to manage the horses. It was interesting to see so small a boy, with his frock and long whip, walking by the side of the team, or sitting down, after a long round, to rest by the side of the plough, and his little dog.

Mr. Jacobs did not expect to be able to give John the means of an education, beyond what he could get in the winter school. And, as he could not give him money nor lands, to set him up in the world, he desired to help him to what was *better*. Yes, something better than gold, or silver, or honor, or even an education.

He wished to guide him in forming a good character. This could not be stolen from him, and sickness and misfortune would not destroy it.

Mr. Jacobs knew how to secure this great blessing to his son. He lived before him like a Christian. His family prayers, morning and at night, had a very excellent influence upon John.

On the Sabbath, the family rose early, and were punctual at the house of God. Mr. Eaton, their good pastor, used to say, when he saw the rain, or the snow, on

Sabbath morning, "Well, I shall have a small congregation to-day, but I know three persons who will be there. Brother Jacobs and his family are not afraid of a little unpleasant weather. I wish all my people were like him in this respect. Then these unpleasant Sabbaths would not be so discouraging."

Thus, in every thing, did Mr. Jacobs and his wife show that they were *true* Christians. The only son of such parents was greatly favored.

"John," said his mother, the next day after the affair of the apples,—"John, do you remember Day, who visited his parents in the village, last summer?"

"Yes, mother," answered John, "I know Ben Day, and a rich man he is, too, I guess, mother."

"Rich," replied Mrs. Jacobs, as she brought her spectacles down upon the Bible,

which her husband had just been reading at the family prayers. Her countenance was full of animation as she spake.

"Rich, John, he may be, but he has no character. I have known Benjamin from a boy. He was taught to look out for a good bargain. His father was rich, and he wanted his son to obtain more riches. He failed in business, last spring, but he has ridden in a splendid carriage, and dressed in fine clothes ever since. The poor people who worked for him suffer for the money which he owes them, and pretends he cannot pay. He is *rich*, John, but not honest. May my son not be like him. We want an *honest* boy, though he begs his bread."

John felt deeply pained while his mother thus talked. He thought that she referred to the few apples; and so she did. Still he was not *quite* sure that he had done wrong. His conduct might be *about right*, he

thought; but his mother was desirous it should be *quite* right.

"Mother," remarked John, with hesitation, "are so *few* apples of any account to Mr. Mason? He has a great many, and we have none. Besides, you recollect, I told you I worked for him all the afternoon, and he made me think I was to have some."

"I know," replied his mother, "that the apples are worth but little. It may be they are worth nothing to Mr. Mason. But *he* has not said so. It was wrong for him to make you think that he would reward you, and then not do so."

"Yes," interrupted John, "I know that was wrong."

"You remember," continued his mother, "that our other neighbor, Jones, owes your father for work, and that he cannot get his pay."

"Yes, mother, and I heard a man say

that Jones never paid any one if he could help it."

"And your father," said Mrs. Jacobs, "offered to take his pay in wood, for the coming winter, but Mr. Jones put him off without an answer. Now, as Mr. Jones has a great many cords of wood piled up in his lot, would it be right for your father to go and get what he thought was right?"

John was silent. He began to see that it took both parties of an agreement to settle it, as well as to make the bargain.

"We must do what is *just right*, in little as well as great matters," added his mother

"That is it," said John, with a happier looking countenance than he had shown since the apples were taken. "I am determined to do exactly right."

CHAPTER III.

BRAVE CONDUCT.

JOHN arose with a light heart the next morning. A good resolution made him strong. He felt no embarrassment when he sat down, after family prayer, to converse with his mother. Right conduct makes a pleasant countenance, as well as a brave heart John never looked more interesting nor appeared happier, to his parents, than he did that morning.

John started off in good spirits to return the apples. As he came along by the old orchard wall, he met James Fisher and Henry Mead.

"What have you here?" said James, taking hold of John's bag of apples.

"Apples, I declare!" he continued; "are you going to make Mr. Mason a present, or did you bring them along for us old friends?"

"No, James," said John. "I thought, last night, I might take part of my pay for working for Mr. Mason. But mother has convinced me that I was wrong. So I am returning them. If I have my pay, Mr. Mason must pay me."

"There," shouted Henry, "that 's just such a fool as John is;" and he seized rudely hold of his bag, and scattered the apples upon the ground.

"Old orchard apples too," cried James, in a still louder voice. "That 's what I call silly honesty."

James and Henry commenced kicking the apples here and there, as John attempted to restore them to his bag. But John was

good-natured though firm in his purpose, and the boys soon gave up their teasing, and the apples were safely restored to their place.

"Now, John," said James, with an air of one who did great things, "let me tell you how we do the business. We do not put up with a little good-for-nothing fruit when we work for rich folks. Ben Riley says, when people don't pay you your wages, it is doing *about right* to take them. We do a little job for Ben once in a while, and so he pays us his own and Mr. Mason's debt at the same time. He is to help us to sly away about a barrel apiece of the best apples. That is what I call looking out sharp."

John felt an honest indignation at such conduct, and was about to reply to James, but the conversation was suddenly interrupted. Grandfather Mason started up from behind a heap of rubbish, just over the wall. He was sitting there to rest after a long

morning walk, when the boys met. He had heard the whole conversation.

James and Henry ran off down the lane.

"Now we are in a fine scrape," said Henry, as soon as they could take breath. "Old Mason will tell Otis about our bargain with Ben Riley, and then I guess we shan't get even old orchard apples. I think you need not have told John our plan. What was that to him?"

"How did I know that there was somebody listening?" replied James, sharply.

He forgot that GOD was listening.

So James and Henry went on to blame each other, until they parted, in no very pleasant frame of mind.

In the mean time, John walked, with an honest face, up to the old gentleman.

"These apples, sir, belong to Mr. Mason. I worked for him yesterday, and he spoke as if he would pay me. But, as he did not,

I thought I would take these for what I did. When I carried them home, and told mother all about it, she convinced me that it was not exactly right. Now I have come to return them, sir, and I hope I shall be excused for doing wrong."

While John was speaking, the old man wiped the tear from his wrinkled face.

"That is what I call honesty, my boy. Nowadays we do not see many such lads. In my day, boys had to walk up to the mark. But now, children are allowed to know more than old folks. I guess neighbor Jacobs does things right in his family."

While he was thus talking, the old gentleman seized John's hand.

"Come, my boy, let us see what Otis will say to all this."

Otis Mason was not well pleased to have his father thus place John Jacobs before him. He felt reproved for not fulfilling his own

promise, and none but very good people like to be told their faults. John Jacobs did not tell him he had done wrong, but Mr. Mason felt that he had. John's conduct had shown this to him. He, however, put a bushel of very choice apples into a basket, and told Ben Riley to carry them home for John. It was a heavy load for Ben. John followed after him with a cheerful heart. He was sure this time that he had been doing *quite right*.

CHAPTER IV

BEN RILEY AND THE MASON FAMILY.

R. OTIS MASON lived in a new, large, beautiful house. His father being very aged, Otis had, for some time, taken charge of the farm. He had made many improvements, that his father thought quite extravagant. He had torn down the old house, which stood near the well-sweep, on the edge of the neglected orchard. His father and grandfather were born there, and yet its frame was firm as when it was built. It was old-fashioned, and, we must allow, inconvenient, and therefore it was removed. Otis's father would say, "O the pride, boys, the pride!" When he saw the fine parlors of

the modern mansion, and the expensive arrangements of the new barns, "It 's all pride and nonsense; but I suppose an old man knows nothing."

Yet he allowed his boys to go on and do as they pleased; for he thought they were "smart," and he had a kind of pride himself in seeing what he called their pride.

Joseph, his oldest son, had just left the farm to his brother, and established himself in business in a large city which was near. The Mason family were not pious. They were rich, and very earnest to obtain more wealth. The young men kept a fine carriage, had fashionable parties, but seldom went to the house of God. They were not generous to the poor, nor did they much regard the interests of any others. They lived mostly for themselves. They gave the lowest wages possible for the work done on the farm. They were often called "hard

men." By this was meant, perhaps, that they sought to obtain a good bargain for themselves, but did not seem to care whether others gained or lost.

Ben Riley had worked for them many years for very low wages. He was considered, by those who knew him, "*a pretty honest sort of a man.*" A famous saying with Ben was, "I mean to do *about right.*" We shall see that what was "about right" with Ben was generally quite wrong.

He had contrived to explain away the plan to pay James Fisher and Henry Mead, which had been exposed. He thought the boys did not understand him, he said. At any rate, he had not given them any apples, he was certain, and he thought nothing more need be said about it.

He had a large family, and, as his wages were very small, he contrived many little ways to make them, as he said, "about right."

One day, Ben had been to the mill with a load of corn. As he returned, he had to pass the door of his own house. It was, he thought, a very trifling matter to leave meal enough to supply his own little ones with bread for a week.

"The Masons have enough," he would say "and it will help to make the wages *about right.*" One day, as he was leaving the yard with a load of the produce of the farm, to sell it at the city market, Otis Mason called to him; "Ben, be sure you get forty-five cents a bushel for the potatoes. I was at the market yesterday, and they are five cents higher than ever. I must have forty-five cents."

"Yes, sir," answered Ben, and drove off.

When he arrived at the market, he sold his load at a great price, and his twenty bushels of potatoes for fifty cents a bushel.

As he drove into the yard, Mr. Mason

asked earnestly, "Did you get forty-five cents for the potatoes, Ben?"

"Yes," answered Ben promptly, "and a high price for every thing. It's good luck to-day, Mr. Mason."

Thus Ben put one dollar into his own pocket, to "square accounts" with his employer, for deducting a day's wages when he was absent to take care of a sick child.

"It will be about right," muttered Ben to himself. He met hard dealing with wrong doing.

Ben Riley did not remember that old saying, that "two wrongs do not make a right," and he forgot the very plain truth, that honesty is the best policy." Besides, he should have known that God watches over our ways. If we buy that which we do not mean to pay for; if we sell that which is not ours; or, if we return a false account to our employers, HE sees and records it all.

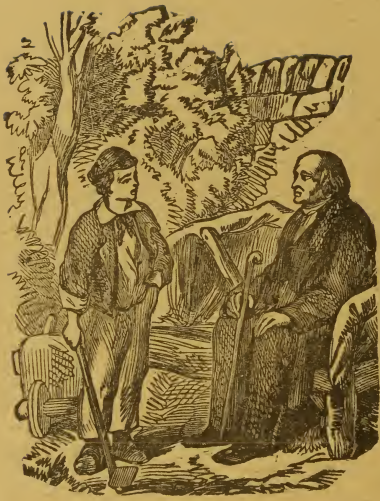
As is the case with most men who do not do just right, Riley's conduct was at last exposed before men, and he lost his place. It occurred in this way. He grew more bold in his liberties with what was not his, and Mr. Mason had become less confident of his honesty. So there was less care on one side, and more suspicion on the other.

Mr. Mason sent by Riley several cans of milk to eating saloons in the city. He received an extra price for pure and rich milk. Ben had a small can of his own. This he kept at a friend's house; and when he came to the city with his milk, he filled the small can, supplying the lack to his employer's customers with *pure water*.

"It 's about right now," said Ben to himself; "for I take out but little, and I see that the cows have plenty of the right sort of feeding." But conscience did not say so, but whispered, "*It is wrong*." But then

Ben could *talk down* conscience. One day, the friend who bought the little can of milk had company, and wanted an extra amount. Ben hesitated, but he said to himself, "It 's only for once, and a little extra water will not be noticed." But it was noticed, because the proprietor of one of the saloons had not felt wholly satisfied before with the quality of the milk. Now he felt sure all was not right ; so he complained, like a prudent man, not to Riley, but to Mr. Mason.

The next morning, Mr. Mason took a little of the same milk which was poured into the market cans, and carried to his customer at the saloon. Ben had just left the daily supply ; but the difference, though not great, was apparent. He was charged with the fraud, and his confusion too plainly showed that the excuses he framed were falsehoods. He was dismissed from the farm without a character which could enable him to get employment where he was known.



CHAPTER V.

JOHN, A YOUNG FARMER.

SINCE John's noble act in returning the apples, the Mason family had become more neighborly at the humble house of Mr. Jacobs. Mr. Otis Mason had often dropped in to talk about his business affairs, and his father began to feel that, in this quiet family, there was a comfort and peace which did not dwell in the more elegant home of his sons; the respectful conduct of John greatly gratified him, and won his confidence. He would often sit down on a bench, near Mr. Jacobs' house, and John would pause from his work, with his farming tool in his hand, and have a pleasant talk.

Soon after Riley had been dismissed, Otis Mason called at the Jacobs' cottage, with his elder brother, Joseph. This brother had once been associated with him in cultivating the farm; but, for a short time, he had been, in part, occupied with business in the city. He wished now to be entirely free from the farm, and to devote his time wholly to his other enterprise.

The brothers conversed with Mr. Jacobs freely about the management of their farm, and finally concluded a bargain with him to take a general charge of it. Otis Mason looked towards John, and said,

"Sir, I hope we shall have your son, too. There are but few boys that I would have on my place. My father does not like to have them in his way. They leave things in disorder, and that frets him. But he has taken great interest in your son."

'Well," replied Mr. Jacobs "let him

try; let him show what he can do, then pay him according to what he is worth. It is well to put boys upon their honor, when they have been fully taught what is right."

The Masons looked at each other in silence. This teaching boys what was right, and then putting them upon their honor, was a way of managing which they had not practised.

Mr. Jacobs' own small piece of land, required but little attention. He now gave nearly all his time to the noble farm of his employer. One of the first things he did, was to put every article about the house and barn in its appropriate place. This Riley was not particular to do. He would mutter to himself, "I'll keep things looking about right. I am not paid for doing everything, a man must look out for himself, and not be jobbing for others all the time."

Following his father's example, John soon learned the nicest order.

"Where's my best harness, John?' Mr. Mason shouted one day, "I want it put upon 'Jerry' in a hurry."

John knew where it was—not a part of it only, but he laid his hand upon it all, and at once. The favorite horse Jerry was put into the carriage.

Riley would have found a piece of the harness here, and a piece there, and a part of it he would not have found at all.

At another time, when some hay was about ready for the barn, a dark cloud appeared. Mr. Jacobs had been sent off on business. John was busy in the barn. Mr. Mason came from the house in great excitement. He shouted for all hands to hurry to the field, and called upon John for the rakes and forks.

"There they are, sir," said John, calmly. Not a moment was lost in seeking for the proper tools. "Old Gray's" harness hung

in its place, and John soon followed the men with the hay wagon. Just as the pattering drops began to tell that the shower was at hand, Gray drew the well made hay into the barn.

"There," said the old gentleman, as he saw, with great pleasure, the rain pouring upon the well raked fields, "it would have taken Ben half of the time since the cloud was seen, to have found Gray's harness, and to have put him into the wagon."

"Yes," answered his son, with evident satisfaction, "and the other half to have found the tools."

Mr. Jacobs began, in the spring, after his employment on the farm, to go to the city market. He carried early produce, and often brought home valuable purchases for his employer's family. John sometimes accompanied him. He was very careful to observe his father's manner of doing business. He

learned to drive through the crowded and narrow streets with great care. He became familiar with the price of every article to be sold, and the way to deal it out to customers. He noticed that his father spoke respectfully to every one, the poorest as well as the rich. He never heard his father ask one price of one customer, and a different price of another; so that John never thought of those tricks, and that deception, by which some endeavor to get rich. Riley practised many of these unfair schemes. A poor Irishwoman, one day, looked into his cart.

"Now," said Ben to himself, "she won't think they are cheap, unless I take off something from what I ask."

"What may you be asking for them 'arly peas?" said the woman as she climbed on to the cart.

"Only thirty cents a peck," replied Ben, "and it's too cheap; can't afford them for that."

Now Ben had asked no one more than twenty-five cents a peck.

"An it 's too much," replied the woman, turning away. "It 's only twenty cents I 'll be giving you." After much talk and waste of time, the price was agreed upon at twenty-two cents.

The poor ignorant woman was confirmed in her opinion that the "yankees" were not honest in the price they asked. Ben satisfied himself by asking the next customer twenty-eight cents, to make the whole morning's sales "about right."

But as Mr. Jacobs was careful, first, to ascertain the fair market price, he never varied from it, and lost no time by disputes about it. Even the Irishwomen soon learned his character for uprightness; and sought his cart, and paid his price without seeking to alter it.

But John did not go to market often, the

first summer of his work on the farm. He made himself very useful to Mr. Mason, in being always ready for any employment suited to his age. So ready and cheerful was he when called upon, that his absence was felt as a great inconvenience.

"I cannot do without him, he is so handy," Mr. Mason would say to himself. Boys that their employers "cannot do without," will always find work enough, and good pay.

CHAPTER VI.

WINTER EMPLOYMENT.

THE ploughing and planting in spring soon passed away. Then followed the hoeing, and the haying, and work for the summer. Soon autumn came, with the fields of rich waving grain, the bending boughs of fruit, the chilling winds and the falling leaves. John liked all of the seasons. He was always busy, and so always contented.

But he was particularly happy amidst the rich fields of fruit, and in gathering it safely from the coming cold.

When all the fall work was done, and the Thanksgiving week over, John's school commenced. He was now about thirteen

years of age. There were much larger boys than he was, in the school, but no one who had made better progress in study. None of them had as much to do out of school, as John. He rose early, and, with his father, took the morning care of the stock at the barn, before breakfast. He proved the words of the proverb true, that "The food of the laboring man is sweet." His plain fare was a greater luxury to him, than are the dainties of the rich to them.

The same work was performed at night, on returning from school. Yet, he found some time in the morning, and several hours at night, for study. If a sum puzzled him he worked and worked, until it came right. Then he felt such a sense of self-reliance,—so much increased confidence in himself, for a new effort at another difficulty, that he was fully rewarded for his perseverance. He knew it better and remembered it longer.

than if his teacher had assisted him. He learned that, if he listened to what the teacher told the class, he needed no other assistance. The teacher commended John, before the school, for his perfect lessons. This excited the envy of some not very good boys.

Henry Mead said he knew how it was. John's father was always studying something. He would warrant he did John's sums. But when he was asked how it was that John spelled and read better, and recited more perfect lessons in everything, than he did, he tossed his head, and replied, "Well, he supposed he was fool enough to study all the time. For his part, he wanted some fun." So envious boys never see the right reason why they are inferior to those about them. John *did* play, and right well did he enjoy it. He was always at the school a little before the time. There he

found some of the best play-fellows, for the best usually come earliest. At noon, he had an hour to play, for he did not go home to dinner.

John delighted to make the school pleasant to other scholars. There was a poor family which lived just off of his road to the school house. The children of this family consisted of James, a boy of about ten years of age, and his two sisters, Nelly and little Susan, or "Sue," as the girls called her. When the snow was deep, Nel and Sue could not go to school without they were carried, and, as they owned no sleigh, they often were obliged to stay at home. This afflicted them very much. When John learned these facts, he called for them with his sled. He would put Nelly on the sled, and say, "Come, James, you be Nelly's horse." He would then take Sue on his back, and off they would go, in fine glee to school.


ROBERTS. DEL. SC

One noon, it was quite stormy, so that the children could not play out of doors. The teacher told them that, if they would be careful and not injure the seats, they might play in the school room.

The dinners were soon eaten. Many large boys had stopped, who generally went home, and it was plain that there would be a rude time.

"Let us play 'trades,'" said one of the boys, a quiet little fellow, who was much attached to John Jacobs. "We can work at them without jumping over the seats; and John is such a good fellow to show us how to act them out."

To this, all the children at once consented, except Henry Mead. He said it was too tame, and he did not care for the old benches; and, suiting his actions to his words, he cut and scratched several desks with his knife

The boys then chose sides, and one party went into the entry, and agreed to be "blacksmiths." When they came in, one hammered away at the anvil, and another worked at the bellows.

"Poh!" exclaimed Henry Mead, giving a little boy a push, who was standing on one leg, and holding up his foot behind him, while another little fellow was hammering as if he earned his living by shoeing horses.

"You stand more like a calf than a horse," continued Mead, "and I should think you acted more like post-drivers, than blacksmiths."

"There," shouted several voices at once, "Henry Mead has told our trade."

"He is a mean fellow," cried James Fisher, doubling up his fist, and approaching Henry.

"Let us turn him out," said another angry boy, looking fiercely at the offender.

"I should like to see you do it," replied Henry, placing himself in an attitude of defiance.

A scuffle now commenced between James and Henry. They had not been cordial friends since the talk with John, near the old orchard. Rogues seldom confide in each other any length of time.

John had come forward to reconcile the parties. He was sitting quietly at his desk, reading a volume from the school library, when the play of "trades," commenced. He was attempting gently to hold James back, when Henry came upon him so violently, that, in the wrestling, one of them struck the teacher's desk, overturned a pile of writing books, which, as they slid to the floor, carried the ink-stand with them. The ink and copy books came into contact, and left the latter in a sad condition.

The noise and wrestling ceased at once.

"There," said Henry, with a bitter sneer, "see what John Jacobs has done. It was his clumsy foot which knocked against the desk, I 'll warrant."

"Let us say," interposed James, "that we opened the windows to air the school room, and that the wind blew the books down."

"Good," answered Henry, thinking this would be more readily believed, than his accusation against John. He expected, too, that John might assent to a plausible story, that shifted the blame from him. But John remained silent and calm.

"Let us say," said the angry boy, who cried, "turn him out," "let us say that we were playing, and the books *jarred* down. That will be about right, for who knows but what the books began to slide before the desk was hit?"

All but John agreed to this explanation This was so *near* the truth, that even som

who did not mean to tell an untruth, were led to think it was right. It would be a confession they had played rudely, and with that they quieted their consciences. It would also keep out of sight an unpleasant part of the truth, that there had been a quarrel.

Mr. Osgood, the teacher, was a reasonable man, but exercised a strict authority. His rod of correction came down upon the oldest and strongest, as well as others, and resistance to it was useless.

When he entered the school, and beheld the mischief, he commenced immediately a searching inquiry. Henry Mead came forward boldly, and professed to know all about it. The boys were playing, he said, very orderly. But being so many of them, the old house jarred, and shook the books from the desk, and they knocked the ink down as they fell.

People, when they tell a lie, sometimes speak in stronger language than if they told the truth. They know they ought not to be believed, and, on this account, they say too much. This was the case with Henry He was too sure.

"It may be," the teacher said to himself, "just as he says;" and he looked at him sternly, and sent him to his seat.

The rogues looked well pleased at the thought that inquiries were over. But the teacher was not so easily deceived. He looked round upon the school, and fixed his eyes upon John. There he sat, with composure, but evidently interested.

"John," said Mr. Osgood, "were you here, when this mischief occurred?"

"Yes, sir."

"Has Henry Mead told the truth, and the whole truth?"

"I will tell you what I know," was the

reply. He then stated the facts just as they occurred, making the case as favorable for James and Henry, as a fair statement would allow; and he added, as he closed, "Sir, I am not sure that *my* foot did not strike the desk, and cause the books to overturn."

"Henry," said the teacher, in a decided tone, "stand up here by John, and say whether he or you have told the truth."

It was much easier, (though not very pleasant,) to stand up at the side of John, than to stand out against his honest statement. So, after a little fruitless effort to maintain his own story, he yielded, and allowed that John had told the circumstances just as they were.

Henry had been a disturber of the good order of the school for weeks, and it was thought best now to expel him. He was heard to say, as he went home with his books, after school, that John Jacobs had got

him into two difficulties, and he would have his revenge, some time.

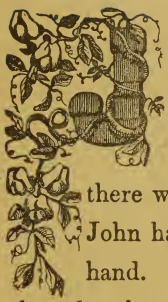
The scholars all felt, as they looked upon the difference between John and Henry, how much better it was to do *right*, than about right."

Mr. Osgood boarded with Otis Mason He told the family, that evening, with great pleasure, the incident of the afternoon.

"John will tell the affair just as it is I warrant you," said Otis.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PLOT.



JOHN JACOBS became more and more useful to Mr. Mason on the farm. When his school closed, and the spring opened, there was much work to be done but John had a willing mind and a strong hand. Though he could not hold the plough, nor repair the fences, yet he could cast the seed into the ground, and cover it up, and, when the haying season came, he could do nearly the same amount of raking and stowing away of hay, as a man.

He occasionally went to market alone, when the load was engaged, and there was nothing to do but to deliver it.

John found some time also to visit the village with the team, on occasional business. There was in the village the neat church, and near it the residence of his pastor. He found it very pleasant to call upon the good man at such times, and was sure of a cordial welcome and kind words of counsel.

In the fall, he did still more of the important work. The richly-laden stocks of corn fell before his sharp knife and strong hand. He threw out from the potato hill, the long furrows of potatoes, which, after a day's work, would make a stout load for "Old Gray."

But the week, spent in stripping the orchards of their golden fruit, seemed to him like play-days; and the generous supply which went to the cellar of his father, made John feel richer than a merchant with well-filled store-houses.

Thus pleasantly the seasons passed on at the farm. Let us inquire how Henry Mead is prospering.

After his expulsion from school, his father began to look round for a situation, where he could be learning some useful business. He conversed with his neighbor Johnson, an excellent wheelwright, who wanted a boy,

and was willing to try Henry, on fair terms. But when this offer was mentioned to Henry, he was very angry. He did not want, he said, to be a mechanic. He was determined to be more of a gentleman, and make "an appearance" in the world. So his father unwisely gave up the purpose of placing him under the care of Mr. Johnson, who, being a pious man, would have been just the employer he needed. The fact was, Mr. Mead had not taught Henry to *obey*. But, as he only desired that his son would do right, and did not use his rightful authority to make him do so, Henry followed his inclination, and did wrong. So would John Jacobs have done wrong, if he had followed merely his boyish wishes, unrestrained by decided and pious parents.

As Henry was bent on a *city* place, his father applied to Joseph Mason. He was about to take into his flourishing establish-

ment a boy of his age, and he made inquiries at the farm house, concerning Henry Mead. His brother Otis, not wishing to keep, from a good situation, a neighbor's boy, was willing to say but little about him. But his father was not so reserved.

"Joseph," said he, "he is the rogue who laid such a nice plan with Ben Riley to get pay, on his own terms, for work. And he is the lad," added the old gentleman, with increased animation, "that proposed to lie his mischief on to our John, at school, last winter, and was expelled for his cunning."

Enough was said. Henry missed of a good situation.

"John Jacobs is at the bottom of that bad luck," Henry muttered to himself, when his father told him that he had seen Joseph Mason, and had learned that he had concluded to take another boy.

Why did not Henry deal fairly by himself,

and refer the failure of his application to his own want of a good character? Because wicked people are seldom *willing* to see the consequences of their own wrong doing.

Henry, having supposed a wrong which he had never received, now hated John worse than ever.

But it is not difficult to get *some* place in a great city, with or without a good character, and Henry Mead was soon putting on the airs of a gentleman, as clerk to a small dry-goods merchant. His means of "making an appearance" were so small, that the honesty of a boy of better principles might have been severely tested, by the temptation to use means not his own. Henry's father "felt most sure," he would not come out well. But then, "how could he help it? the boy *would* go."

With this poor comfort, the unhappy father tried to content himself.

Henry had lived in the city a year, or more, when John came in, regularly, with the early produce of the farm. John wore a farmer's frock, and heavy boots, which were well fitted to keep him from the dangers of wet feet. His hat was made for comfort, and protection from the sun and wind. His ruddy face, and strong, brown hand, bore the marks of honest toil. And then his manly and honest bearing were better recommendations to the confidence of sensible people, than fine clothes and pretending manners.

Henry and John often passed each other in the thoroughfares of business. But Henry cast at John a look of contempt, and passed on without speaking. John smiled at this. He felt only pity for Henry, for he knew that those having such feelings could not be happy.

One beautiful Sabbath, in the autumn of

this year, John Jacobs was received as a member into the church in which his parents had been, for many years, consistent members.

It so happened, that, on that Sabbath, Henry Mead was at home, and attending church with his father. I am afraid that his desire to make a fine appearance, as a city clerk, was a stronger reason for going, than a wish to receive any good. But whatever were his motives, he was deeply impressed at the solemn service. When the pastor addressed John, and the other young men who were to be received with him, and exhorted them to live for heaven, and for God, and not to turn aside after riches, nor be enticed by worldly pleasure, he felt as he had not felt since he was a child, and listened to the kind words of his Sunday teacher, in that very house. When the minister turned to the congregation, and

addressed the *young people,* warning them against seeking to satisfy themselves with the show and pride of life, Henry thought every body was looking at him. But these serious feelings were only for a moment. As soon as the service was over, he inquired of his father, in a slurring way, "If that was not Mason's market boy, who had become so very pious." "I rather think," he continued, "if the minister knew him as well as I do, he would not hold him up as a pattern of piety. Country boys do not come into the city for nothing, where there are so many fine things, especially when they have their pockets full of other people's money. There are a few things to *see,* as well as to eat and wear, in our city."

While Henry was uttering these insinuations against John, in too excited a tone not to be easily overheard, one of the youthful church members was about passing him.

"What do you *know* against the honesty of John's profession of religion?" he inquired of Henry, in a respectful manner

"More than I choose to tell *you*," was the abrupt reply.

The "young clerk" left for the city the next morning, but his wicked words were left behind. They passed from one idle story-teller to another, and were even repeated by some who should have given no heed to them. Every thoughtful person of the village and town who knew their author, knew well how little credit to give to them. They knew how well established was the integrity of John Jacobs. Yet, how sad it is, that good people will listen to and repeat the tales of the slanderer! If they did not, but little hurt could those who try to spoil another's good name, do. But the story was told, and something added to it, though almost every "whisperer" said, when he

had repeated it, "I do not believe a word of it."

After a while, it reached the ears of Mr. Otis Mason. He was told that Henry Mead was ready to prove that John Jacobs went to see "the shows" in the city; that he never failed, when he came in, to buy some nice thing to eat; and that, occasionally, he treated himself with the purchase of a new book, a nice pocket handkerchief, or some such thing that he could "sly away;" and, finally, Henry had noticed that John always had plenty of money.

As Mr. Mason was not a pious man, and, perhaps, because he had been cheated once by his market man, he was disturbed by these slanders. Besides, he loved money so much, that his fear of losing even a small amount, made him very jealous of all in his employ. "Yet," he said, "John has been so honest and truthful. He is so industri-

ous, and keeps the company of those only, who are of good character, this talk cannot be true."

"And it all came from that Mead villain," interposed his father, with much spirit.

"Otis, don't you believe one word of it."

But Otis' thoughts troubled him. He was sure, come to think of it, that John had not, during the two weeks past, returned from market until a little later than formerly though he left home at an unusually early hour. He had occasionally noticed him reading a new book, of a costly binding, that was sure. No such books could be found at the Sabbath school, or among the neighbors. Lastly, his credit of money, received from the sales by John, would show that there was a smaller amount of money returned than before. "There must be something in it," he said to himself.

So easy is it for the backbiter to fasten suspicion upon the most upright!

John met these reflections upon his character, with a frank denial. He did not go round to complain about it, nor did he threaten what he would do to Henry. He felt grieved, and suffered much in his feelings, to think any one should believe them. Yet, he trusted in God, feeling sure that he who *knew* his innocence, would make it plain.

"What do you know, Mead, about John Jacobs?" said Mr. Mason, rather roughly, one morning, as he happened to find him alone in his employer's store.

"O, that he is very pious, to be sure," answered Henry, sneeringly. "Did n't I see him taken into the church?"

"What of the going to see 'shows,' and 'the fine books,' and having plenty of money? Come, Mead, I don't want to be put off, tell me what you know."

"Well, if people out in your town have told what *I* did n't tell, I suppose it 's because they know what I do not about the pious rogue," answered Henry, ready enough not to be responsible for all that tale-bearers had repeated.

"But what I did say, I know, and you may know just as well as I; John passes by here towards the Museum, most every market morning. He goes in somewhere in that vicinity, and spends an hour or so, I am certain. And you may see him most any time, while his horse is baiting, sitting on the wagon, with such a book as *I* cannot afford to buy."

Henry uttered the last sentence with an air of superior conscientiousness concerning expenditures.

"As to the money," he remarked coolly, "you know whether he is not trusted with any amount of the market money."

Just at this moment, John, himself, passed the door, towards the place of shows and amusement. Mr. Mason followed him at a little distance. As he stepped out, Henry said to himself, "Well, I have fooled the whole of them, but I have had my revenge on John Jacobs. He has suffered a little, I guess."

Strange that Henry did not think that he had been making suffering for *himself*.

John passed up the street, and turned into the one on which the Museum was located He passed in front of it, paused against the door, and crossed the street, and entered the lecture room of the church opposite.

Mr. Mason followed far enough to learn that there was a *morning prayer meeting* held there. He returned to the stable-yard, into which John had turned his horse, where "Gray" was quietly eating his "baiting." In the mean time, Mr. Mason inquired what

the state of the market had been for a few weeks, and learned that the price of the articles he had sent to market had been exceedingly low. Having done this, he mounted the seat of John's wagon, and waited his return.

Scarcely had "old Gray" finished his necessary lunch, when John returned. He manifested no surprise, or confusion, at seeing Mr. Mason. He modestly asked him if he would ride home on the wagon.

"I will," said Mr. Mason, "I cannot find better company."

John blushed, but made no reply. He laid a new valuable volume, which he carried in his hand, down upon the seat, while he slipped the bits into "Gray's" mouth, and remounted:

"A very fine and costly new book," said Mr. Mason; "you are lucky to come across such books."

"I am, very," replied John, without any emotion. "While Gray is eating what father thinks he ought to have before returning, I go to the morning prayer meeting, up in the city. O! Mr. Mason, it is so pleasant to be there. Will you go, some morning?"

"Perhaps so, John; but do they have books to sell, or to lend, at the prayer meeting?"

"No, sir; but several of the gentlemen there made many inquiries of me: where I came from, and about my interest in attending. But few boys go, so that he noticed me more. And I suppose," added John, smiling, "that my frock made them look at me more than at others."

"Very likely, John."

"Well, one of these gentlemen asked me if I was fond of reading good books, and if I had many. He said that, if a young man wished to be pious, good books would be

useful to him. So he lends me a volume most every week."

Mr. Mason talked but little more on the way home. But John made frequent remarks about the meetings, and the contents of the volumes he had read. John's happy frame of mind, and the incidents of the morning, deeply impressed Otis Mason.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT ONE CAN DO.

"DID I not tell you so, Otis?" said the father, to his son, when Otis Mason had told what he had learned about Henry's stories.

"I told you so. When I have known a boy, as I have John, for two or three years; yes, when I have 'summered and wintered' such a boy; such fellows as Henry Mead need not bring their slanders to me. I tell you, John does every thing just right. There are no loose places in John's principles."

"I think you are right, father," said Otis.

"I *know* I am," replied the old gentle-

man, and walked with a self-satisfied air, to another part of the room.

"If Mead," he resumed, again approaching his son, "if Mead had named, in the first place, just *what* it was he knew against John, as he did when you put the question right to him, then John could have explained all, before."

"I know it, father," said his son, "and I, for one, feel ashamed that I ever listened a moment to stories against him, which did not name the facts."

"I learned better than that, years ago," replied his father, determined to be satisfied with himself.

The explanations were soon at the village, and in every mouth. The tale-bearers all "knew the slanders wan't true, and never believed a word of them."

'John has always been *so honest*," said one.

"And Henry Mead, every body knows, has owed him no good will this long time," exclaimed another.

They should have thought of this before, and, for these reasons, *not repeated the tales.*

James Fisher came to John's father's, that very night, to tell John how many mean things he knew in Henry; and that he knew that he had made up his stories, so as "to be up with John." But John did not encourage him to talk in this manner. He merely remarked, that he hoped that Henry regretted his conduct, and would be a better young man, now that he must see that he hurt himself by it, more than others.

James had been quite intimate with Henry, and had long teased his father to allow him to get a place in the city. He thought Henry must enjoy life, for he seemed to have nothing to do, but to be a gentleman. So it seemed to James, from his

friend's boasting conversation. But James' father, who had been quite undecided, now fully determined to apprentice him to Mr. Johnson. James himself was much better pleased with this, since Henry's name had become so much reproached in the village. Under Mr. Johnson's judicious management, he became a much better boy. He exchanged his intimacy with Henry, for a more frequent intercourse with John. He was led to the Sabbath school, which he had neglected, and began to love to read the Sunday school books.

"What a change there is in James Fisher," said a teacher to the Superintendent, at the close of the school, one morning.

"Yes," was the reply, "he keeps better company than he used to."

As to Henry, he seldom came to his father's, after his slanders were exposed. He changed his employers several times

and it became evident that he was not in a fair way to make an *honorable* show in society, if he did a *fashionable* one. Even his old associates, who were hard-working farmer's boys and mechanics, ceased to envy him. They plainly saw that respect and honor come from doing just right, in the business or place where we are, whether in the city or country.

When the work of the farm allowed John some leisure moments, he amused himself with the care of a rare species of doves, from which Mr. Mason was endeavoring to raise a brood. They would sit quietly in the door of their little cot, and feed from his hand. His friend James, whose sisters he carried to school, sometimes came to visit him, and he would show him how even birds loved kind treatment.

As the evenings of the fall grew longer, John began to visit his aged friend, Mason,

and read to him his borrowed books. They contained, in a pleasing form, much truth that the old gentleman had not learned. He listened, and sometimes the tears would flow silently down his face. Still he did not talk much about his feelings, and John thought best not to say much to him. But he became more and more interested in John's books, and in his visits. Otis Mason, too, heard, without seeming to seek to know the truth. The Jacobs family had strangely won his confidence, and drawn him, almost without his knowledge, certainly without his owning it, to think well of their religious sentiments. These good books were aiding in deepening his serious feelings. Occasionally he read a little for himself, when John left one in his way.

While such were the feelings in the Mason family, the father, one day, overheard John, while he was at prayer. He had

gone to a retired corner, surrounded by piles of hay. He prayed in a low tone. He thought only God heard him. But so earnest did he become, that he uttered his prayer so as to be heard quite distinctly.

We do not know that he mentioned, in this prayer, the name of him who was listening, though he did often pray for him. But this was certain, that, as the aged man turned away, he wiped tears from his face. He had heard *something* which touched him.

That night John read to grandsire, concerning the labors of certain missionaries. The account contained the story of an aged heathen, who, when told the story of the cross, was greatly affected; and when he became a convert, endeavored to tell that the gospel had come just in time to save him. He took a stick, and plucked a brand from the fire. "There," said he to the missionary, "the good teachers bring Christ to save

me just so." When this story was read, Mr. Mason interrupted John.

"Do you believe, John, that the old heathen man became a Christian?"

"O, yes! Why not?"

The old gentleman made no reply, and John proceeded with his reading.

Thus did God work with this aged, and, hitherto, prayerless and impenitent man. Not many weeks after this event, John, in his turn, overheard his broken, but earnest prayer. He had felt more than he had expressed.

He began, after many years of neglect, to visit the house of God. The prayers of God's people became deeply engaged for him, and it was soon apparent that grandfather Mason had "passed from death unto life."

How wonderful that one should be born into the new life of a Christian, in extreme

old age! But so it was. His son had so far become interested in serious things, that he was found weekly at the house of God Now, on Sabbath morning, the carriage was early at the door. So it used to be occasionally; but for a ride of pleasure. But, as the aged parent steps in, then his son and family, you would know, by their serious but happy countenances, that they were going to the house of prayer.

This family once thought they did *about right*, not to work on Sunday. Now, they know and deeply feel, that to do right, they must worship God on that day. So differently do they see their duty now, that it is not improbable that they may all become Christians

CHAPTER IX.

AN AGREEABLE SURPRISE.

E had almost forgotten to notice again, the excellent mother of John Jacobs, to whom he owed so much. She continued true to her plain, sincere, Christian principles. The aged Mr. Mason now came to see her often. She knew how to instruct him, and he found much pleasure in her society. When he hinted at the good John had done him, she always interrupted him, by saying, "O, my son has only done right—only what he ought to do; and in a weak way too, often like all of us God has been at work in your

family, and he uses feeble instruments sometimes."

So she was not likely to allow John to be flattered into pride, or a vain idea of his own goodness. This was right, because John had done only what every boy ought and can do, if he seeks help from God to act always in his fear.

"What do you think of Joseph Mason's offer, mother?" said Mr. Jacobs one evening, after the family prayers. He generally called her "mother," in a familiar way.

"I think I prefer our boy should be a good, honest, hard-working farmer, as he is."

"But is not Mr. Mason's offer a liberal one?"

"Yes, good in a worldly sense. But that is the best place where there is the best chance for the true riches."

"True, and I think just as you do. Let

as have our only child at home, a plain, but honest farmer, rather than expose him to the allurements of a great city, and the temptations of wealth, if he should be prospered in business."

This conversation occurred just after Joseph Mason had made them a call. He heard of John's integrity, and he came to offer him a situation in his flourishing store, which he would have offered to but few. He would promise to take him into partnership at a reasonable time. He was sure, he said, John would be rich, and be able to set his parents up in their old age, in independence of all labor. He was, therefore, surprised that his proposals were not received with eagerness. Mr. and Mrs. Jacobs were only very polite, and thanked him for the confidence he expressed in their son, and said they would think of his offer.

When John heard of this proposal, he

only remarked, "My parents understand what is best."

When the parents of the village heard that John had the offer of such a position, they reminded their sons that Henry Mead had *sought* a much lower place in the same trading house, and been refused; and all the boys were glad, and said, "If John goes there, he will not be proud."

One little girl said she hoped he would go, for then she should go and see him, and he would show all the pretty things of the city.

But John did not go. His parents were decided that there was the best chance for him to be a good man where he was. They thought more of his piety, than of riches Some people said they "wondered greatly' at their decision. One worldly man remarked it was cruel to rob the boy of such a chance "to be something." But the most of their

neighbors said, that they had decided consistently with the principles they had always professed, and they now believed, more than ever, that Mr. and Mrs. Jacobs were true Christians.

Otis Mason was much pleased that John was still to remain with him, and he felt that he had new reason to have confidence in his piety. Although he could not appreciate the feeling which led a young man to treat so coolly, an offer of worldly gain, he could see that it was an evidence that he possessed an inward experience, different from his own.

As the Thanksgiving festival drew on, he was determined to give John some substantial token of his regard, but he disclosed his purpose to no one. He made arrangements to have a grand gathering of such friends at his house, on the evening of that day, as would gratify his father's religious feelings:

and, of course, John and his parents must be of the number. There had been great parties at the farm house before, but never such a one as was now proposed. Heretofore, the rich and fashionable acquaintance alone had been invited. But now the still more elegant mansion of Joseph, in the city, had more attractions for them. Besides, it was hinted, in the circle of Otis's worldly associates, that he was getting so many pious notions that there could be but little enjoyment for them.

Many hearts were warm on Thanksgiving day, with the interest that was felt in the evening gathering, and, as the light of day disappeared, and many eyes were turned towards the place of meeting, the house seemed to blaze with light. The pastor came with his cheerful countenance; the Sabbath school teachers, and members of the Bible classes, and finally that much attached

band, who had lately made an open profession of religion. The good Mrs. Jacobs, who never thought highly of great parties, was not only present, but none brought with them more of real delight. She chatted freely with her minister, and had a kind and pleasant word for all the young folks, and moved even her aged friends to feelings of youthful pleasure to which they had been long strangers. Her aged friend, Mr. Mason, confessed he had never known such solid peace, and a pleasure so satisfactory. The tears started from his eyes, while he exclaimed, "It 's only lately that I began to live." And what happy groups of young people! They did not need the dance, nor cards, nor any plays which could offend the most pious. There was a company in the large kitchen, of merry little folks, playing blind-man's buff. They did not mind stumbling over a chair, nor running against a

table, nor even being piled into a heap upon the floor. They were good-natured, and, if one received a hard knock, he only laughed the heartier, and thought, while he rubbed his aching head, that he would look out better next time.

It would be hard to tell who were happiest, these playful children, or the parents who left their own circles quite often to take a peep at them.

The young people are scattered here and there, some talking together right earnestly, of happy days just past, and happier ones expected, while others trip off through each room, carrying sunshine wherever they go. All are as free as the summer birds.

But none of all the party, either young or old, bore a countenance of more unalloyed and satisfying enjoyment, than did Mr. Eaton, the faithful minister. It was pleasant to see how the children clung around him

with respectful, but fond attention. Each little face seemed to say, as it looked confidingly into his, "This is *my* minister."

The young people referred to him all their questions of friendly dispute; and when his decision was given, they dashed away to talk of it, as a matter that was settled.

Thus pleasantly the evening passed away. One little girl, who looked as if she was so tired that another step would be difficult, thought "It was *so* short."

The beloved pastor talked to them cheerfully, as they all crowded into the parlor. He reminded the young that now was their spring time. They must sow good seed, if they would have, as the farmers had just received, a good harvest. And, turning to his aged friends, he spoke of the "better land," and of the home in heaven most reached. His words were kind and feeling

words, for his heart was full of love; and the "good old tune" which was sung, and the tender strains of the prayer which followed, made all feel that *God* blessed them while separating, as he had smiled upon their happy hours of meeting.

It was whispered, from one to another, as they broke up, that the pastor had received a most substantial token of Mr. Mason's regard.

"I hope it 's a hundred dollars," exclaimed a merry young girl, as she darted out of the door, to join her parents, who were waiting for her.

"I warrant," remarked a more sedate young woman, "that it is no mean affair, if this evening's entertainment is any evidence of Mr. Mason's feelings."

But they were all obliged to go home without knowing what the gift was, much to the regret of many curious inquirers into this great question.

Some of the poorest members of the party were not long in deciding what *their* evidence of Mr. Mason's kindness was, for, on arriving at their homes, the substantial additions to their stores, of articles from the farm, which they found stowed away in their carriages, plainly showed. They thanked God that the influence of religion was felt where it had so long been resisted.

John Jacobs was one of the last to leave the scene of so much real pleasure. His parents had returned home before him. When he entered, a cheerful fire glowed upon the hearth. His home seemed more than ever, peaceful and inviting. When he entered his little room, and took from its place his well-used Bible, to read a few words before retiring, a note fell from between the leaves. It had been placed there by his father, a few moments before. It was from Otis Mason. It read as follows

DEAR JOHN,

It is now about three years since you began to work with us on the farm. I feel that your excellent parents, and you, by their instruction, have taught me much which I had never taken pains to learn before. Many good resolutions have been formed in my mind, which will never, I hope, be forgotten. I have always found you so exactly honest in all your conduct, that I have often felt reproved for my own principles. I thought you could not, or did not need to be better. But since you became pious, and since, through the new influences about him, my aged father became a Christian, new light has broken into my mind. I am not a Christian, John, but I trust I earnestly desire to be one. I owe so much to you, and to your parents, for my altered purpose, and my hopes that I may yet get to heaven, that I wish to show it in more than words. As you have often expressed a wish to spend a winter at some academy, I will pay all your expenses at any one you may select. We must contrive to get along without you until spring. If you continue to love study as you now do, this winter shall not be the only one in which you shall have such a privilege.

Mr. Mason was true to this engagement John spent two winters at one of the best schools of the State. He returned each summer, as ready as ever to work. He has

now become a most intelligent and prosperous farmer. He partakes of the Lord's supper with Otis Mason, for he is now a member of the same church. The grandfather has gone to the church in heaven. John still maintains his principle of doing, not only "about right," but "as he would that others should do to him."